



YOUTH HEALTH AND BEHAVIOUR: THE ROLE OF DIGITAL HABITS AND SUSTAINABLE CHOICES

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ABSTRACT

This study provides an in-depth analysis of youth lifestyle choices of koppaka village, pedavegi mandal, focusing on junk food consumption, digital engagement, mental well-being, and sustainability awareness. Conducted through a structured survey, the research investigates how unhealthy eating habits and excessive screen time impact daily routines, physical health, and psychological wellness among youth aged 15 to 25. It further explores the level of understanding and participation of young individuals in sustainable development initiatives. The findings highlight significant challenges including poor dietary habits, digital fatigue, rising stress levels, and limited eco-conscious behavior. At the same time, the study identifies a growing interest among youth to adopt positive lifestyle changes when provided with appropriate education and policy support. The research offers evidence-based recommendations to promote healthier behavioral patterns, digital mindfulness, and greater environmental responsibility through collaborative efforts by educators, families, and policymakers.

KEYWORDS: Youth behavior, Lifestyle patterns, Junk food consumption, Digital usage, Screen time, Mental well-being, Social media impact, Sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

Youth represent the most dynamic and influential segment of society. Their habits, behaviours, and values not only shape the present but also determine the future of nations. In today's rapidly evolving world, young people are navigating complex challenges—ranging from digital overload and unhealthy lifestyle choices to environmental concerns and mental health issues.

This project aims to explore and analyse the behaviour patterns of youth across multiple domains, including demographics, junk food consumption, social media usage, behavioural changes, sustainable development awareness, and their opinions and recommendations for a better lifestyle. By conducting a structured survey, this study captures the real-life preferences, struggles, and insights of youth aged primarily between 15 and 25 years.

The objective is to understand how external influences like peer pressure, advertising, digital platforms, and educational gaps affect youth decisions and daily routines. The findings will serve as a foundation to propose meaningful recommendations for parents,

educators, policymakers, and young individuals themselves.

Through this project, we seek to promote awareness, encourage healthier habits, and inspire a more sustainable and balanced lifestyle among today's youth of vanguru village, pedavegi mandal, empowering them to build a more responsible and resilient future.

METHODOLOGY

1. Research Design

This project follows a quantitative research design using a structured survey in vanguru village, pedavegi mandal to collect data from youth participants. The design enables statistical analysis and interpretation of behavioural trends among young individuals.

2. Data Collection Method

Data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire consisting of 100 multiple-choice and rating-scale questions. The survey was distributed offline to ensure wide participation.

3. Sampling

- Target Population: Youth aged 15–25 years.
- Sample Size: 100 respondents (approximately).
- Sampling Technique: Convenience sampling was used, selecting respondents based on availability and willingness to participate.

4. Survey Sections

The questionnaire was divided into the following key themes

- Demographics (age, gender, location, education, income)
- Junk Food Consumption and Health Awareness
- Social Media and Gadget Use
- Behavioral and Psychological Changes
- Sustainable Development and Environmental Awareness
- Opinions and Recommendations

5. Data Analysis

- The collected responses were compiled and categorized percentage-wise.
- Findings were interpreted using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage).
- Insights were drawn by comparing patterns, preferences, and awareness levels.

6. Limitations

- The sample may not fully represent the diverse population of Indian youth.
- Self-reported data may include bias or inaccuracy in responses.
- The study focuses primarily on urban and semi-urban youth, with limited rural representation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Section 1: Demographics

The demographic information shows a predominantly young population (15–25), mostly female, with undergraduate education. Most participants live in urban or semi-urban areas with low to moderate family income.

Section 2: Junk Food Consumption and Health

Many youths consume junk food frequently due to taste, convenience, and peer pressure. Awareness of health risks is limited, and ads plus lack of alternatives contribute to continued consumption. There's support for healthier policies and food options.

Section 3: Social Media and Gadget Use

Youth are highly engaged on social media, often at the cost of productivity, sleep, and mental health. Although some are aware of its downsides, many still struggle with excessive use. There's demand for better awareness, education, and regulation.

Section 4: Behavioral Changes in Youth

Youth are experiencing increased stress, distraction, and social pressure, mostly due to digital overuse and societal

expectations. Although many are aware of these changes, guidance, digital detox efforts, and better emotional support are needed.

Section 5: Sustainable Development & Environmental Awareness

Youth awareness of sustainability is growing, though many lack daily eco-friendly habits. Education, activism, and practical policies can enhance their role in creating a greener future.

Section 6: Recommendations and Opinions

Youth and adults suggest balancing technology with healthy routines, improving food policies, and increasing mental health support. Schools and parents are seen as essential in promoting healthier lifestyles and sustainability.

Findings

1. Demographics & Lifestyle Habits

- Majority of respondents were aged 19–22 and predominantly female.
- A large portion of youth live in nuclear families with low to moderate family income.
- Participation in extracurricular and physical activities is low.
- A high percentage of youth eat outside food frequently and spend very little time on fitness.

2. Junk Food Consumption

- Junk food consumption is widespread, driven by taste, convenience, and peer influence.
- Awareness about health risks of junk food is low.
- Many youths feel guilty after consumption, yet continue due to lack of alternatives.
- Nutritional label reading is rare among youth.

3. Social Media and Gadgets

- Youth spend significant time on social media, especially Instagram.
- Major usage is for entertainment and networking, though many feel it affects productivity and mental health.
- Symptoms like stress, anxiety, distraction, and digital fatigue are increasing.
- Despite awareness, social media and phone addiction remain high.

4. Behavioral Changes

- Youth are more stressed, distracted, and experience lower patience levels than earlier generations.
- Family arguments and social pressure related to screen time are common.
- Many youth feel socially disconnected despite constant online presence.

5. Sustainable Development & Environmental Awareness

- Awareness of sustainability and climate change is moderate, but action is limited.
- Youth use eco-friendly products inconsistently and rarely participate in environmental activities.
- Energy conservation, plastic use reduction, and support for waste management are low.
- Fast fashion and private vehicle use are common due to cost and convenience.

6. Opinions & Suggestions

- Youth recognize the negative impact of excessive gadget use and junk food.
- There is strong support for including sustainability and mental health education in schools.
- Many believe parents, schools, and policies have a role in guiding youth behaviour.
- A majority support stricter regulations on junk food and digital use.

Recommendations

For Schools and Educators

1. Integrate health and wellness education: Include mental health, physical fitness, digital detox, and nutrition in the curriculum.
2. Introduce mandatory physical activity: Make sports, yoga, and outdoor activities part of daily routines.
3. Promote sustainability: Organize awareness campaigns, recycling drives, and eco-clubs.

For Parents and Families

1. Model healthy digital behavior: Set screen time limits and engage in family activities without gadgets.
2. Encourage balanced diets: Reduce junk food availability at home and provide nutritious alternatives.
3. Have open conversations: Discuss stress, peer pressure, and emotional well-being regularly.

For Policymakers and Government

1. Enforce stricter junk food advertising regulations, especially those targeting youth.
2. Support mental health programs in schools and colleges through counselors and workshops.
3. Implement waste management and sustainability policies that are youth-inclusive and easy to follow.

For Youth and Students

1. Practice digital balance: Limit social media usage and prioritize offline hobbies.
2. Be environmentally responsible: Use sustainable products, avoid plastic, and save energy.
3. Stay active and mindful: Participate in physical activity and mental health practices like meditation or journaling.
4. Be critical of media influence: Don't compare lifestyles and body images seen online.

CONCLUSION

This project presents a comprehensive analysis of youth behavior across various domains, including lifestyle choices, junk food consumption, social media usage, mental well-being, and awareness of sustainability. The survey reveals critical insights into how modern pressures, digital dependency, and shifting habits are shaping the younger generation. While many youths are aware of the negative effects of unhealthy eating, excessive gadget use, and environmental degradation, action remains limited due to factors like convenience, peer influence, lack of alternatives, and low awareness. Social media plays a dual role — offering connection and entertainment, yet contributing to anxiety, distraction, and reduced face-to-face interactions. The responses also highlight a growing openness among youth toward change, provided they receive the right guidance, support, and access to healthier options. Youth behavior is not isolated; it is deeply influenced by family, education systems, policy frameworks, and societal trends. To foster a healthier, more responsible, and sustainable generation, collective efforts from schools, parents, policymakers, and the youth themselves are essential. Education, early intervention, and supportive environments can empower young people to make informed decisions, adopt balanced lifestyles, and contribute meaningfully to a better future.

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