



BALANCING HEALTH, TECHNOLOGY, AND SUSTAINABILITY: A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

Ch. Dharani Sri^{*1}, C. A. Jyothirmayee², K. Sreelatha³, V. Nagalakshmi⁴, M. Rama⁵, K. Swarnalatha⁶, N. Gayatri Devi⁷, Mrs. K. J. Subhashini⁸, Ms. N. Madhavi⁹, Ms. K. Susmitha¹⁰

II B.Sc Chemistry Major Student¹, Faculty of Department of Physics³
Faculty of Department of Chemistry^{2,4-10}
Ch.S.D.St. Theresa's College for Women.



*Corresponding Author: Ch. Dharani Sri

II B.Sc Chemistry Major Student, Ch.S.D.St. Theresa's College for Women.

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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 today are growing up in an era of rapid technological advancement, fast-changing lifestyles, and increasing societal pressures. Their behaviour, choices, and awareness significantly influence not only their personal well-being but also the future direction of society. With rising concerns over junk food consumption, excessive screen time, declining physical activity, and environmental degradation, it is vital to understand the habits and perceptions of the younger generation.

This project aims to explore the multifaceted aspects of youth behaviour by conducting a detailed survey across various themes, including food habits, digital media usage, mental and emotional health, and sustainable living practices. The responses reflect the realities faced by today's youth and provide insights into their lifestyle choices, challenges, and level of awareness about critical social and environmental issues.

By identifying patterns and gaps, this project seeks to support better decision-making, promote healthier habits,

and encourage responsible digital and ecological behaviour among the youth population.

METHODOLOGY

To explore and analyze youth behavior comprehensively in koppaka, pedavegi mandal, a structured methodology was followed. The approach is detailed below:

1. Survey Design

A well-structured questionnaire comprising 100 questions was developed to gather data across six key themes:

- Demographics
- Junk Food Consumption & Health
- Social Media Usage
- Behavioural and Mental Health Impacts
- Sustainable Development Awareness
- Opinions and Policy Recommendations

Each question was designed to be clear, concise, and youth-friendly to ensure accurate and honest responses.

2. Sampling Method

A random sampling technique was used to target a diverse group of respondents from different age groups, gender identities, educational backgrounds, and regions. The survey primarily focused on individuals aged 13–25 years, capturing a broad view of youth perspectives.

3. Data Collection

- The survey was conducted in person interactions.
- Over 100 responses were collected over a period of 2 weeks.

4. Data Analysis

- The data was compiled and analysed using Microsoft Excel.
- Responses were converted into percentages and interpreted theme-wise to identify key trends and insights.
- Charts, graphs, and comparative summaries were used to visualize the findings.

5. Validation and Review

- Inconsistencies and incomplete responses were removed to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the analysis.
- The final report was structured to align with the survey objectives and present a holistic view of youth behaviour.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Section 1: Demographics and Lifestyle

1. Age groups in the survey are broadly categorized. More specific ranges like 19–22 years should be included for better clarity.
2. Gender options in surveys should go beyond binary choices; 56% of respondents identified as female.
3. The educational level survey gathers data on an individual's highest educational attainment, with most respondents being high school graduates.
4. The survey reflects that a significant part of the population lives independently due to agriculture-based livelihoods.
5. 44% of respondents have a family monthly income below ₹20,000.
6. 34% of people occasionally participate in extracurricular activities, while 14% do not participate at all.
7. 36% of respondents eat outside 2–3 times a week, and 20% do so at least once a month.
8. 30% of respondents spend 30 minutes to 1 hour on physical activities daily.
9. 16% of people regularly engage in social or community service, while 34% do so rarely.
10. 36% of respondents live in nuclear families, while 34% live in joint families.

Section 2: Junk Food Consumption and Health Awareness

11. Two-thirds of respondents consume fast food at least once a week; 42% eat it 2–3 times a week.

12. 44% said the most frequently consumed junk food includes snacks and chips.
13. The leading causes of unhealthy eating were taste preferences (32%) and convenience (16%).
14. Street vendors are the most common source for buying junk food.
15. 40% of respondents reported spending ₹500–₹1500 monthly on junk food.
16. 38% sometimes eat homemade meals, while 20% rarely do.
17. 32% said they are not very aware of the health problems junk food can cause.
18. Fatigue was identified as the most common issue, indicating that junk food may lower energy levels.
19. 32% of respondents drink sugary beverages occasionally.
20. It is generally recommended to always check nutritional information before consuming packaged food.
21. Many people reported feeling happy but guilty after eating junk food.
22. Most respondents never check food labels, showing a lack of interest or awareness.
23. Many said they try to avoid junk food but still eat it often, indicating a struggle to break the habit.
24. 38% reported significantly reducing junk food consumption.
25. 50% said increased awareness of health risks can help reduce junk food intake.
26. Respondents stated that advertisements influence them somewhat, but personal preference matters more.
27. 38% support regulating junk food near schools and colleges, but not in all public areas.
28. 32% believe rules around junk food availability can help students improve their eating habits.
29. 30% are willing to eat healthy if the food is affordable.
30. 38% believe junk food is a major cause of obesity, diabetes, and other diseases, while 16% think it is not harmful if consumed in moderation.

Section 3: Social Media Usage and Digital Behaviour

31. 48% use social media daily, 40% for 1–3 hours, 8% for less than 1 hour, and 4% for more than 6 hours.
32. Instagram is the most used platform (30%), followed by YouTube (8%).
33. Entertainment is the primary reason for using social media.
34. Most believe social media reduces productivity, though some manage their time well.
35. 34% have taken breaks from social media, either frequently or briefly.
36. Respondents report experiencing social media fatigue either frequently or occasionally.
37. 30% spend 2–4 hours daily on phones, while 16% use it for over 7 hours.
38. 34% frequently use social media while studying or working.

39. 36% sometimes feel addicted to gadgets, while others rarely or never feel this way.
40. 34% have never experienced cyberbullying.
41. 34% do not believe social media promotes unrealistic lifestyles, but a few think it reflects real life.
42. Respondents rarely compare themselves to others on social media.
43. 32% rarely feel the urge to check their phones constantly.
44. Many respondents rarely use gadgets before bed.
45. 32% said their sleep pattern has not been affected by excessive gadget use; others struggle with sleep.
46. Most said face-to-face interaction hasn't reduced due to social media.
47. A majority rarely experience digital fatigue.
48. 34% believe social media has both positive and negative effects on health.
49. Many believe stricter social media regulations are needed for youth.
50. 30% think youth are more stressed than previous generations; others feel stress levels are similar.

Section 4: Behavioural and Emotional Impact

51. 30% have noticed some behavioral change due to social media but manage it well; others report major changes.
52. 28% rarely experience mood swings; 20% report frequent changes.
53. 36% believe their patience level has remained the same; others get frustrated easily.
54. 36% sometimes feel distracted while working; 18% often feel distracted.
55. 36% sometimes feel socially disconnected due to online activity.
56. A significant number procrastinate due to online distractions.
57. 38% said their attention span has stayed the same; others struggle to focus.
58. 42% rarely feel pressured to fit in with online trends; 16% feel pressured a lot.
59. 36% ignore negative comments on social media; some get upset or react.
60. Many believe aggressive behavior among youth hasn't increased or are unsure.
61. 40% feel digital connectedness has both negative and positive effects on youth behavior.
62. 34% sometimes argue with family over screen time; 20% do so rarely.
63. 40% find texting easier but prefer face-to-face interaction.
64. 30% do not feel lonely despite active social media use.
65. 36% do not think youth are materialistic; others believe only some are.
66. 36% say relationships aren't affected by excessive gadget use, or they manage it well.
67. 42% can focus without checking their phones; others try to limit usage.
68. 36% support digital detox for youth mental health; others feel it's needed only in extreme cases.
69. 34% believe stress and anxiety are the biggest behavioural issues among youth today.

Section 5: Sustainability Awareness and Behaviour

70. 36% are somewhat informed about climate change and want to learn more.
71. 36% believe youth contribute to environmental degradation through unsustainable habits.
72. 32% rarely use eco-friendly products; 18% never use them.
73. Many somewhat participate in recycling; others rarely do.
74. Sustainable development is seen as a balance of environmental, economic, and social needs.
75. Excessive gadget use is believed to impact the environment through e-waste and energy use.
76. Many respondents sometimes reduce or reuse plastic, but not consistently.
77. 40% believe stricter waste management policies are necessary.
78. Most do not actively practice energy conservation.
79. A significant number rarely use public transport over private vehicles.
80. 44% do not think much about fast fashion or sustainable clothing.
81. 38% consider sustainability important when making purchases.
82. Technology is seen as crucial for sustainable development.
83. Some occasionally participate in environmental initiatives, though not regularly.
84. Many rarely discuss sustainability with peers.
85. Pollution and waste management are the top sustainability concerns in India.
86. Most believe sustainability education should be included in school curricula.
87. 34% support reducing waste as the best way youth can help the environment.
88. 46% prefer more environmental education in schools to promote sustainability.
89. A majority believe current lifestyle habits will negatively impact future generations.

Section 6: Recommendations and Opinions

90. Youth face major challenges like mental health issues and excessive screen use.
91. 40% believe youth can balance tech with health by limiting screen time and engaging in outdoor activities.
92. 30% support regulating junk food advertising; others think personal choice matters more.
93. Self-awareness and offline hobbies are seen as ways to reduce screen addiction.
94. Introducing physical activities in schools is a popular idea to promote health.
95. Most believe mental health awareness should be part of school education.

96. Youth are encouraged to reduce waste and adopt eco-friendly practices to support sustainability.
97. 32% support stricter policies on junk food and soft drinks; 30% on digital well-being education; 28% on regulating screen time.
98. Parents are advised to set screen limits and educate children on responsible digital use.
99. 34% support mental health programs; 26% support limiting social media influence; 15% suggest fitness programs and work-life balance.
100. Increasing mental health support and counseling, promoting work-life balance, and stress management are important suggestions for improving youth lifestyles in India.

Recommendations

Based on the survey findings and behavioral analysis, the following recommendations are proposed to address the key concerns regarding youth health, digital behavior, and sustainable development:

1. Promote Healthy Eating Habits:

- Integrate nutrition education into school and college curriculums to raise awareness of the risks of junk food and encourage healthy eating.
- Strict regulation of junk food advertisements, especially those targeting youth and children.
- Encourage homemade meals and provide affordable healthy food options in schools, colleges, and public places.

2. Encourage Responsible Digital Use

- Introduce digital well-being programs in educational institutions to promote mindful technology use.
- Set screen-time guidelines at home and in schools, including digital detox sessions and offline activity hours.
- Educate youth about online safety, cyberbullying, and digital fatigue, encouraging balanced screen time and self-regulation.

3. Prioritize Mental Health Awareness

- Make mental health education mandatory in school curriculums.
- Offer counseling and support services for students dealing with stress, anxiety, and peer pressure.
- Conduct workshops on coping strategies, time management, and emotional resilience.

4. Strengthen Environmental and Sustainability Practices

- Include practical sustainability education in schools (e.g., recycling, eco-friendly habits, energy conservation).
- Support youth-led initiatives for environmental awareness and community action.
- Promote the use of public transport, eco-friendly products, and reduced plastic consumption through awareness campaigns.

5. Institutional and Parental Involvement

- Schools and parents should collaborate on reinforcing healthy routines, such as outdoor activities, limited screen use, and nutritional awareness.
- Educational policies should emphasize holistic development, integrating health, environment, and digital literacy into student life.

These recommendations aim to empower youth to make healthier lifestyle choices, reduce the negative impact of technology, and contribute meaningfully to sustainable development. Support from educators, policymakers, and families is essential for long-term impact.

CONCLUSION

This project offers a comprehensive insight into the lifestyle habits, digital behaviour, mental well-being, and environmental awareness of today's youth in India. The survey findings reflect a generation that is both informed and influenced—one that shows promise, yet faces significant challenges in managing health, digital habits, and sustainability.

Key observations reveal that while many young individuals understand the risks of junk food and excessive screen time, behaviour often diverges from awareness. Social media plays a central role in their lives, contributing to both connectivity and mental strain. Similarly, although there is a growing consciousness about sustainability, daily practices remain inconsistent.

However, the responses also demonstrate a willingness to improve. Many youths are open to behaviour change when provided with the right information, education, and support systems. This shows a positive outlook for future interventions through school programs, parental guidance, and policy reforms.

In conclusion, to ensure a healthier, more balanced, and environmentally responsible future, it is crucial to empower youth through education, regulation, and active community engagement. A coordinated effort among schools, families, and policymakers is essential to translate awareness into action and help youth lead healthier, more mindful, and sustainable lives.

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