



SHAPING TOMORROW: A YOUTH SURVEY ON HEALTH, HABITS, AND LIFESTYLE

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ABSTRACT

This study explores lifestyle patterns among kovvuru, East Godavari district aged 18–25, focusing on behavior, health habits, digital usage, and environmental awareness. The research identifies key challenges such as junk food consumption, screen addiction, and mental stress while highlighting youth engagement in physical activity and sustainability initiatives. Findings show that while youth are digitally connected, they face emotional and behavioral pressures tied to social media and gadget use. Despite limited awareness of health risks, there is notable openness to healthier diets and sustainable practices. The paper offers actionable recommendations across health, digital well-being, and environmental policy to support youth in achieving balanced and responsible lifestyles.

KEYWORDS: Youth behavior, lifestyle survey, junk food consumption, mental health, social media addiction, environmental awareness, sustainability, digital well-being, physical activity, public policy.

INTRODUCTION

Youth today are at the centre of rapid social, technological, and environmental change. As the most dynamic and adaptable segment of the population, their lifestyle choices and behaviours have a significant impact on their personal well-being as well as the future of society. However, modern youth also face increasing challenges such as mental stress, unhealthy eating habits, excessive screen time, peer pressure, and limited environmental awareness.

This project aims to explore and analyse the lifestyle patterns and behavioural changes among youth, with a specific focus on areas such as junk food consumption, social media and gadget usage, mental and physical health, and sustainability practices. By understanding how these factors interact and influence young individuals, this study seeks to provide insights into their current needs and challenges.

Through a structured survey, data were collected across six key areas: demographics, health and junk food habits, social media usage, behavioural impacts, sustainable development awareness, and personal opinions. The findings from this research will help in identifying trends and gaps and form the basis for practical recommendations that can support youth in leading healthier, more balanced, and responsible lives.

METHODOLOGY

1. Research Design

This project uses a **descriptive survey research design** to gather quantitative and qualitative data on youth lifestyle, behaviour, health habits, social media usage, and environmental awareness in kovvuru, East Godavari district.

2. Sample Selection

The survey targeted youth participants primarily aged between 18 and 25 years. Participants were selected using convenience sampling from various educational institutions and communities, ensuring representation from both rural and urban areas.

3. Data Collection Tool

A structured questionnaire was developed containing multiple-choice questions. The questionnaire covered six key sections

- Demographics
- Junk food consumption and health
- Social media and electronic gadget usage
- Behavioural changes in youth
- Sustainable development and future impact
- Opinions and recommendations

4. Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed in-person to maximize reach and participation. Respondents were given clear instructions, and confidentiality was assured to encourage honest and accurate responses.

5. Data Analysis

Collected data were compiled and analysed using descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequency distributions. Qualitative responses were categorized and summarized to extract common themes and insights related to youth behaviour and opinions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Section 1: Demographic and Behavioural Findings

The majority of respondents in the survey belonged to the 23 to 25 age group, with undergraduates being the least represented. Female participants outnumbered males, and no one opted for the "Prefer not to say" gender category. Despite being fewer in number, undergraduates contributed valuable and accurate demographic information.

Most participants were from rural areas, and a portion reported a monthly income below ₹20,000, indicating they were daily wage earners. Regarding extracurricular engagement, 56% of the participants were involved in such activities, while 44% were not.

A notable 40% of respondents preferred eating outside food daily. Encouragingly, all participants reported engaging in at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day. Only four individuals stated they do not participate in social or community service activities. Lastly, 60% of the participants came from nuclear family backgrounds.

Section 2: Junk Food Consumption and Health – Summary

The survey revealed that 41% of participants consume junk food once a week, with 60% favoring snacks like chips. The main reasons cited for junk food consumption were convenience and taste preferences. About 40% of respondents purchase junk food from street vendors, and 41% spend less than ₹500 per month on it. However, only 14% prefer homemade meals over fast food.

Notably, 42% of respondents are unaware of the health risks linked to junk food, and 60% reported no health issues from its consumption. Carbonated or sugary drinks are consumed by 40% of the participants. Only 34% regularly check nutritional information on packaged foods.

Emotional responses include 40% feeling happy but guilty after eating junk food. A small number of participants try to balance junk food with healthier options, and 40% have made efforts to cut down on junk food intake. Some are influenced by family and friends in this regard, and 39% acknowledge the impact of advertisements on their consumption habits.

There is strong public support for government action: 60% believe stricter regulations on junk food sales are necessary. Many also agree that banning junk food in schools and colleges could promote healthier eating habits among students. Encouragingly, a significant number of respondents are open to switching to a healthier diet if affordable options are available. While participants recognize that junk food plays a role in lifestyle-related diseases, many believe other factors are equally or more important.

Section 3: Social Media and Electronic Gadget Usage

The survey revealed that most participants spend 1 to 3 hours daily on social media, primarily for entertainment purposes like watching videos and memes. Instagram and Snapchat emerged as the most popular platforms. About 48% of respondents acknowledged that social media affects their productivity to some extent, but they are generally able to manage their time well. 44 individuals reported taking a temporary break from social media, and some experienced stress or anxiety, depending on the content they viewed.

Mobile phone usage is high, with 50% spending 2 to 4 hours daily on their devices. Many graduates use social media during study breaks. Alarmingly, 90% of respondents feel addicted to electronic gadgets. Instances of cyberbullying were reported by 54%, though mostly only once or twice. A few respondents recognized that social media promotes unrealistic lifestyle standards, yet they don't take them seriously.

Nearly half (48%) of the participants admitted to comparing themselves with others online. While most trust social media for information occasionally, they also verify it from other sources. A notable number of respondents feel the urge to check their phones hourly, and 50% use gadgets before sleeping, despite trying to limit usage. Some reported that excessive gadget use has negatively impacted their sleep patterns.

20% of the participants acknowledged a decline in face-to-face interactions due to social media. A small number experience digital fatigue occasionally. Overall, participants agreed that social media affects mental health—both positively and negatively. There is also a shared belief among some that stricter regulations and policies are necessary for youth to promote healthier online behavior.

Section 4: Behavioural Changes in Youth

The survey highlights a range of behavioural changes observed among youth today, with **increased stress levels** compared to previous generations, though not drastically different. A significant **56%** noticed that **social media has impacted their behaviour**, and while **mood swings** are rare, some respondents reported **reduced patience** and **increased distraction**—with **40%** always feeling distracted during work or study.

Social disconnection was reported by 44%, while procrastination and reduced attention span were common issues, with 58% acknowledging the latter. The pressure to conform to online trends was felt by 57%, and half the participants reported ignoring negative online comments. Alarming, a noticeable rise in aggressive behaviour among youth was strongly reported, and 59% felt that digital content is influencing behaviour negatively.

Arguments over screen time were frequent in 61% of households, and many individuals preferred texting over in-person communication. Despite online activity, 40% often felt lonely. While most weren't sure about youth being materialistic, many agreed that excessive gadget use harms personal relationships and reduces focus.

Respondents expressed a clear need for digital detox initiatives to protect mental health, and agreed that the greatest behavioral challenge for today's youth is their addiction to social media and electronic devices.

Section 5: Sustainable Development and Future Impact

The survey shows that while some youths are aware of climate change, many feel the need to learn more. Only 60% acknowledge that youth contribute to environmental degradation, and very few actively use eco-friendly products. However, more than half of the respondents participate in recycling activities, and many support stricter waste management policies.

Energy conservation is practiced regularly by many, though public transport usage remains occasional. There is a clear preference for sustainable brands over fast fashion, with 84% of respondents considering sustainability important in their purchasing choices. Nearly half believe technology plays a vital role in promoting sustainable development.

Over half of the participants are actively involved in environmental initiatives and often discuss sustainability with peers. Major sustainability challenges identified include population growth, waste management, climate change, and extreme weather events.

There is strong support for incorporating sustainability education in schools (78%), and respondents believe youth can contribute to a greener future by reducing waste and pollution through sustainable habits. Social media, influencers, and government policies are seen as effective tools to increase awareness. More than half of the respondents feel that current lifestyle habits will negatively impact future generations significantly.

Section 6: Opinions and Recommendations

The survey highlights that 40% of respondents see social pressure and unrealistic expectations as the biggest challenges faced by today's youth. However, 58% engage in outdoor activities and exercise, which helps balance technology use with a healthy lifestyle. There is a strong

opinion that junk food advertisements should be more strictly regulated due to their influence on unhealthy eating habits.

Participants recommend implementing digital well-being policies in schools and workplaces to reduce screen addiction. Schools are also viewed as key players in promoting healthy habits by educating students on nutrition and lifestyle choices. Over half of the respondents believe parents should share responsibility for mental health awareness among students.

Nearly half of the participants agree that youth can contribute to sustainable development by reducing waste and adopting eco-friendly habits. The introduction of digital well-being and mental health education in schools is recommended as an important policy change to foster a healthier youth lifestyle. Parents leading by example with healthy digital habits can positively influence youth. Additional suggestions for improving youth lifestyles in India include increasing mental health support and counseling, promoting work-life balance, and emphasizing stress management.

Recommendations

1. Health & Nutrition

- Increase awareness campaigns on the health risks of junk food and promote homemade meals.
- Regulate junk food advertising, especially targeting youth.
- Encourage schools to integrate nutrition and healthy lifestyle education into their curriculum.

2. Digital Well-being & Mental Health

- Implement digital well-being policies in schools and workplaces to limit screen time.
- Promote mental health awareness through school programs and parental involvement.
- Provide accessible mental health counselling and support services for youth.
- Encourage parents to model healthy digital habits and communication.

3. Social Media Usage

- Educate youth on responsible social media use and coping strategies for cyberbullying.
- Promote digital detox initiatives to reduce addiction and improve focus.
- Encourage balance between online and offline social interactions.

4. Physical Activity & Lifestyle

- Support outdoor and extracurricular activities to promote a balanced and active lifestyle.
- Raise awareness about the negative effects of excessive gadget use on sleep and social behavior.

5. Sustainability & Environment

- Integrate sustainability education in school curricula.

- Promote youth participation in environmental initiatives such as recycling and energy conservation.
 - Encourage adoption of eco-friendly products and reduction of plastic waste.
 - Support stricter government policies on waste management and environmental protection.
 - Use social media campaigns and influencers to raise awareness about sustainable practices.
- 6. Policy & Community Actions**
- Develop policies that address youth mental health, digital addiction, and healthy eating habits.
 - Strengthen collaboration between schools, families, and communities to support youth development.
 - Increase accessibility of affordable, healthy food options to encourage better dietary choices.
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CONCLUSION

The survey provides valuable insights into the lifestyle, behaviour, and challenges faced by today's youth across multiple dimensions including health, digital usage, social pressures, and environmental awareness. The findings reveal a youth population that is highly engaged with technology and social media but also vulnerable to its negative effects such as addiction, reduced attention span, and mental health concerns. While junk food consumption is widespread due to convenience and taste preferences, awareness about its health impacts remains limited.

Encouragingly, many young people participate in physical activities and express a willingness to adopt healthier and more sustainable habits. The importance of sustainability is increasingly recognized, with a significant portion of youth engaging in recycling, energy conservation, and supporting eco-friendly brands. However, gaps in awareness and practice still exist, emphasizing the need for comprehensive education and policy interventions.

The recommendations stress the critical roles of schools, families, and government in promoting balanced lifestyles—through digital well-being policies, mental health support, nutrition education, and environmental initiatives. By addressing social pressures, encouraging responsible digital use, and fostering sustainable habits, we can empower youth to lead healthier, more productive, and environmentally conscious lives.

Ultimately, this project highlights the urgent need for collaborative efforts to support youth in overcoming challenges and realizing their full potential for the benefit of themselves and future generations.

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