

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

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ABSTRACT-

Technology is an emerging aspect of the current **society's** fabric. Students in such times have access to superior means of communication through the courtesy of the internet, which is amply available. Social, cultural and visual environment are effectively altering the way in which the current generation of youth gets motivated and called to the action. The present era is known as the digital age where everything is constantly evolving and developing, thereby easing the load of executing laborious manual work. The research paper aims to analyse the effects of digital citizenship on youth. The said analysis entails an appraisal of the basic as well as niche elements of digital citizenship in the context of the quintessential goals of digital citizenship and digital medium. The limitations of digital citizenship presented by factors such as invasion of privacy by some companies preying on ignorance of users, potential of being used as propaganda tool, out of the legal purview have also been taken into account. The paper attempts to address the urgent requirement of understanding the desires and endeavours of the youth so as to find concrete solutions towards evolving responsible digital citizenship.

Key words- Digital citizenship, Digital age and Digital medium.

INTRODUCTION-

Responsible digital citizens are the need of the hour as digitization has taken over all the aspects of our life. But the digital understanding of the citizens is not increasing in a proportionate manner. The mismatch created by this lacuna is resulting in irresponsible citizens who are endangering their own personal and social life as well as others. Correcting this gap will help in the long run to solve most of the problems like cyber-bullying, invasion of privacy, phishing, hacking, etc. Especially in India where digital footprint is increasing at an astounding rate of 4.6% of the Gross Domestic Product while over 30% of the population lacks digital literacy. Our research aspires to delve deep into the intricacies of this problem and provide a solution.

Such problems are being researched with respect to specific aspects including, Primary and Mental health issues, privacy, cyber-bullying, social media etc. Youth of our country need to be protected against the consequences of irresponsible digital citizens and various solutions will be provided to solve this very issue.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY-

Today not only the youth but even kids are using the digital media to explore, connect, create and learn. Since it's the most powerful media for the same. Having said this we also have to deal with some problems like cyber bullying, digital cheating, and safety and security concerns.

Hence it is very important that we are well literate and skilled digital citizens. There are certain points to be followed in the digital world.

- 1. Online security-** We should be well aware of the strategies for managing our online information and keeping it secure from online risks such as identity thieves and phishing. We should know how to create strong passwords to avoid scams and to analyse privacy policies.
- 2. Digital Footprint-** While protecting our own privacy it is also very important to respect others privacy. With our each post online we are creating a permanent impression of ourselves in the digital world. Hence it is very important that we act in a responsible way while sharing any information online as it is going to have a great impact on our digital reputation
- 3. Self Image-** It is important to focus on our online vs offline identity. We learn the benefits as well as the risks of presenting ourselves through different personas and its effects on ourselves, our reputation and our relationship
- 4. Copy Right-** We seem to live in a copy paste culture so being aware of our responsibilities while sharing any information online is most important. We should avoid plagiarism and piracy and also have a fair idea about the copy rights.
- 5. Communication-** We should be able to build positive online communities which are possible when we follow digital ethics in all our online interactions. We should also be digitally literate enough to identify and evaluate any information in an effective way so that we know the quality and credibility of different websites
- 6. Cyber bullying-** We should know what to do in a cyber bullying situation and understand how our action both negative and positive can impact the online community hence it is crucial to have supportive online communities. In fact internet offers amazing ways to communicate with others throughout the world. This communication should be done in a safe and secure way by knowing the difference between inappropriate contacts and the positive connections and yet this is just the beginning.

CONCEPT OF DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP-

Digital citizenship is defined as "those who use internet regularly and effectively" (K Mossbregger, 2011) and it happens in two stages: information dissemination and citizen deliberation. Digital citizenship examines three aspects namely: economic opportunity, democratic participation and inclusion in prevailing form of communication. 3 principles of a digital citizen are: Respect, educate and product; consisting of three sub-principles each. Digital citizenship is an amalgamation of all the development in the digital field and its convergence with participation of people into creating a digital society. The word cyber-space was coined by

William Gibson in his science fiction novel 'Necromancer' where he defined this as "The three-dimensional virtual landscape created by network of computers".

Digital citizenship paves the way for creation of a knowledgeable society, information society, netizens, medium of communication, transparency of information, etc. But it also comes with its danger such as invasion of privacy occurring by companies preying on ignorant users, apathy of the government to make sure it's safe, propaganda by the companies, etc. Lack of digital literacy is a major problem in our country coupled with exploding digital access is further aggravating this shortcoming of digital citizenship. The regulation of such liberal medium has been criticised by many but like every other medium it has both pros and cons.

OBJECTIVES-

- 1) To motivate and engage student's which is observed during classroom visits, walk-through, and observations
- 2) To provide measures to keep the digital platform unbiased and ensure equal access to all the people.
- 3) To use questions and a range of learning objects to frame curriculum and ideas to enhance critical thinking and problem solving, creativity, communication, and character education.
- 4) To Suggest improvements to current interpretation of digital citizenship and making it more conducive to young-minds.
- 5) To engage student's in participation, and greater homework completion as indicated by higher student grade point averages.
- 6)

EXPLANATION-

Digital citizenship in India is still on in nascent stage the following are some reasons which keep digital citizenship to attain its full potential.

1-India has not been able to convert into a knowledge society:

Knowledge society is the sharing of knowledge used to better human condition. Increase in this ease of sharing of knowledge has all the requisites of creating a knowledge society that has not happened. Wide gap between urban and rural internet access; 69% have access to internet in urban areas while only 39% have access to internet in rural areas.

- 1) Lack of digital literacy among internet users in India.
- 2) Skewed ratio of internet access to men (71%) and woman (29%),

Solutions for the problem are:

- 1) Decreasing the urban-rural gap by giving special incentives by the government to companies to set-up infrastructure in remote areas.
- 2) Providing digital literacy policies for state governments and education for school children.

- 3) Persuasion techniques to abolish gender bias from societal facade replacing them with more equality-based outlook.

2- Problem of privacy of people and violation of people's fundamental right of movement.

The digital citizenship entails giving your personal information to all the digital platforms. An example is China's Social credit rating policy which rates citizens based on their social media, what things they buy etc.

Reasons for such behaviour are:

- 1) Apathy for strangers' privacy.
- 2) Using the excuse of national security to deny people their rights.
- 3) Assuring that misinformation prevails over information which instigates propaganda.

Solutions are as follows:

- 1) Generating the values of respecting each other's privacy and following strict repercussions.
- 2) Government interference can be allowed on matters of national importance with policies that regulate such actions.
- 3) Such people with doubtful motives should be identified and dealt with.

3- Social media and online gaming causing trouble in our life.

Social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, and etc act as a medium of connection with the world. But they do come with their drawbacks like addiction, youth preferring virtual world over reality. Entertainment is a big part of the digital scene where the same problems arise. Such as:

1. Fear of missing out (FOMO) causes obsession in people.
2. Addiction of social media as well as games is a widespread phenomenon among youth.
3. Giving out personal information to strangers or apps.

Solutions are: -

- 1) Deliberately disconnecting from the virtual world and spending time with family and friends.
- 2) Regulation of social media and gaming and self-regulation by the companies that provide such services.
- 3) Having strict data privacy policies and amending the IT act to make sure social media and gaming are in legal purview.

4- Increasing number of online fraud and other illegal activities.

There has been a phenomenal increase in illegal activities online and frauds and its targets are youths because of lack of digital awareness. Over 24% of our youth have faced online fraud which is alarming. Cybercrime rates have increased over 300% between 2011 and 2014 and there were over 11,592 cases of cybercrime in 2015. Online phishing, stalking are common problems faced by adolescent females nowadays. Illegal activities including Piracy websites commonly used by youths, selling of drugs, and etc. The rise of

irresponsible digital citizens is due to: -

- 1) This concept being new is out of the legal purview making it perfect for unscrupulous people to conduct their business.
- 2) Lack of digital literacy and lack of awareness among youth.
- 3) Youth they click on harmful websites without verification of authenticity resulting in spread of virus or malware.

Solutions are as follows-

- 1) Making internet safer by bringing it into legal purview.
- 2) Encouraging the youth to have digital literacy.
- 3) There must be comprehensive policies along with strict repercussions that follow.

The above problems of lack of awareness about responsible digital citizenship among youth; their solution is centring around government initiatives/policies which show drawbacks of red tapes. The other is revolving around teaching the youth which suffer from lack of qualified personals and lack of funding and infrastructure. Policy making and amending act do suffer from certain drawbacks like unwillingness of government and procedural complications. Therefore, the best solution to these problems is combination of quasi-governmental bodies which will be under legal control but free from red tapism that comes from it. Educational courses by private bodies will solve the problem of lack of infrastructure and trained staff for teaching the youth.

SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH-

- a) Students learn that they can go to exciting places online, but they need to follow certain rules to remain safe.
- b) Students explore reasons why people use passwords, learn the benefits of using passwords, and discover strategies for creating and keeping strong, secure passwords
- c) Students explore what it means to take on responsibilities in both their offline and online communities as a way to learn how to be good digital citizens.
- d) Students learn the definition of hate speech and understand how it affects individuals, groups, and communities.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE-

Digital citizenship has been researched by many authors in a different way and depending on their socio-cultural and economic environment of their respective countries. The paper titled "Digital Citizenship" by AyetkinIman published in TOJET January 2014 volume 13 has given the skill-based interpretation stating "Digital citizens must have extensive skills, knowledge, Internet and technology access and schools must guide the students to be a digital citizens". Paper titled "Development of a Scale to Measure Digital Citizenship among Young Adults for Democratic Citizenship Education" by MoonSun Choi published in Ohio State university, 2015 focuses on theory-based assessment of digital scale to calibrate it for inclusive digital

citizens. Report on Digital citizenship used as classroom techniques by Lelia Meyer (2016) focuses on it being internet tool provider for learning.

LIMITATION-

According to my study Digital citizenship far outweigh the circumstances. Few limitations are as follows

1. Excess of dependency can cause trouble.
2. Higher risks of being of susceptible to scams and virus.
3. A very important though expected risk is stemming their negatives impact on health. It mainly concerns the eyesight and increase the risk of myopia among the young generation.

CASE STUDY-

Digital media is evolving at a rapid rate, whether we're ready for it or not. One minute, we are in awe of how easy it is to seek out extraordinary learning opportunities in the virtual world, but the next minute, we're faced with the dilemma of possibly posing risks for our students. The first step was to provide professional development sessions for the teaching and support staff in our community.

So, the essential points to be noted are as follows: -

1. Responsibility and Ethics
2. Social implications
3. Collaboration
4. Motivation and Confidence

CONCLUSION-

The Digital Citizenship is the future of the world now and everyone will be a part of it but this also implies that it needs to have responsible citizens and today's youth are going to be tomorrow's digital citizen. This concept has many working problems mainly caused by irresponsible users and appropriate measures can be taken. Measures such as appointing Quasi-Governmental bodies and private companies are suggested ones and by this paper, we conclude that various problems mentioned in this paper are reasonably satisfied. Problem of Privacy, lack of knowledge, lack of legal support, urban-rural access etc is minimized by implementing the solution given by this paper. Not all about technology is bad or dangerous, however it's our responsibility to investigate and learn how to be good digital citizens in order to use technology in a responsible manner.

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