

# Negative Effects of Social Media in Rural India

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**Abstract:** *This research investigates the harmful effects of social media on rural communities in India, where approximately 65% of the population resides. Despite the widespread adoption of platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter), which serve as vital bridges to the wider world for rural residents, this digital integration brings significant challenges that warrant careful examination. Using a mixed-methods approach incorporating structured questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews across four districts in Karnataka state (Kolar, Tumkur, Vijayapura, and Ramanagara), this study comprehensively examines how social media negatively impacts six key dimensions of rural life: face-to-face communication patterns, where traditional community gatherings are increasingly replaced by digital interactions; work-life balance, with constant connectivity blurring professional and personal boundaries; mental health and well-being, evidenced by increased anxiety and social inadequacy stemming from exposure to idealized urban lifestyles; erosion of traditional values and cultural practices through algorithm-driven global content; heightened privacy and security concerns in close-knit communities; and the spread of misinformation in regions with limited digital literacy and verification resources. While acknowledging the benefits these platforms provide, such as WhatsApp's transformation of information sharing, Instagram's influence on cultural expressions, Facebook's facilitation of community gatherings, and X's rapid information dissemination, this research highlights how the social fabric of rural communities is being fundamentally altered in ways that particularly affect vulnerable demographics of the society, thus addressing a critical gap in understanding social media's specific impact on rural Indian communities and providing empirically-grounded insights to inform targeted interventions and policy recommendations designed to protect traditional community values while facilitating adaptive responses to digital transformation.*

**Keywords:** Facebook, Instagram, Social Media, WhatsApp, X

## INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms have changed how people communicate and interact. This shift is especially important for rural communities around the world. The digital transformation offers great connectivity, but it also brings unique challenges. The use of social media in rural areas has created complex social dynamics. This change needs close attention. It can impact community structures and social norms. In India, the digital revolution has been particularly transformative. Over 700 million people use the internet. Smartphone use is also growing fast. Social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram are now part of daily life, even in remote villages. For rural India, where approximately 65% of the population resides, social media serves as a vital bridge to the wider world. Farmers use platforms to access agricultural information, market prices, and weather forecasts. Community groups use WhatsApp to plan local events, share resources, and keep cultural traditions alive. Young people in villages can now easily find educational content, job opportunities, and global views that they couldn't access before. However, this digital integration comes with significant challenges. Misinformation spreads quickly in village networks. This can cause social tension or even violence. Younger, more tech-savvy community members are changing traditional power structures. Social media shows urban and Western lifestyles. This can create big gaps in what rural youth aspire to. It may also lead to cultural confusion. The uneven access to digital resources further complicates this landscape. While smartphone usage has increased dramatically, digital literacy remains inconsistent. Women often have less access to devices and the internet than men. Connectivity issues, unstable power, and economic struggles impact how rural communities use social media.

This research study investigates the harmful effects of social media in rural areas. It examines its impact on face-to-face communication, work-life balance, mental health and well-being, traditional values and cultural practices, privacy and security issues, misinformation spread, etc. These factors highlight how social media influences everyday life in these communities. This study is important because it can show the unique challenges that rural communities face. They struggle to adapt to digital communication while keeping their social ties and cultural identity intact. The transformation of interpersonal communication patterns in rural settings represents a critical area of concern. Traditional rural communities have always depended on face-to-face interactions. The new way of communicating builds strong social bonds and helps keep the community together. These communication patterns help share knowledge, solve conflicts, and make decisions together. Social media platforms offer new ways to connect. However, this can decrease both the number and quality of in-person interactions. This change brings up important questions about how to keep social ties and strengthen community resilience in rural areas.

Social media has changed work-life balance in rural communities. Rural areas differ from cities. In cities, work and home life are separate. But in rural places, daily activities blend together more. Agricultural operations, small businesses, and home duties have always mixed together. They often shift in time and space. Digital connectivity from social media has changed old patterns. This shift may upset the balance between work and personal life in rural areas.

Rural populations need special attention for mental health and well-being. These areas often have limited access to mental health resources. Social media can create new stress. This happens because of more social comparison, digital peer pressure, and exposure to urban lifestyle standards. The psychological impact can be strong for rural youth. They often face a struggle between their local realities and global dreams. The researcher examines how increased social media use may connect to higher anxiety, depression, and social isolation in rural areas. Rural communities have long held cultural heritage. They keep unique traditions, customs, and social practices alive by passing them down through generations. Social media platforms have changed how cultural elements are seen, practiced, and shared. The shift of traditional

practices into the digital market raises worries about keeping authenticity and cultural continuity. This research looks at how social media can change the way cultural knowledge is shared and kept in rural areas. In rural areas, privacy and security take on new meanings. Here, trust within community networks shapes how information flows. Social media platforms have changed how information spreads. They reach beyond traditional community limits. This shift has created new risks for rural populations. This research looks at the privacy challenges rural communities face. It focuses on their digital literacy and awareness of online security protocols. The study looks at how traditional ideas of privacy in rural areas change with digital information sharing. Misinformation spreads easily on social media, which creates big problems for rural communities. In rural areas, traditional ways to verify information depend on community networks and direct observation. Social media platforms bypass traditional verification systems. This can speed up the spread of false information. The economic dimensions of social media integration in rural areas constitute a critical area of investigation. Digital platforms can help rural businesses grow and reach new markets. However, they also bring new challenges for these enterprises. Traditional business models that rely on personal relationships and local reputation need to change. They must adapt to the demands of the digital marketplace. This research looks at how rural businesses handle these challenges. It also studies the economic gaps that may increase from using digital platforms. Studying how social media affects rural communities is important. The researcher also needs to think about the technology available and how well people understand it. Reliable internet, digital devices, and tech skills greatly affect how rural people use social media.

This study looks at digital transformation in rural communities. It uses research and theory to add to existing knowledge. The goal is to offer practical insights for policy-making and community development efforts. This research study is important for understanding how digital changes affect rural communities.

#### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The research paper, *“Social Media for Development: Outlining Debates, Theory, and Praxis,”* delivers an overview of the new area of development using social media, understanding gaps in understanding and

proposes new avenues for conceptual structures through empirical cases, as well as practical applications for businesses, policymakers, NGOs, and the academic. The results, however, highlight the fact that social media's contribution to development is a contentious process that frequently serves to uphold established power structures and Western-centric development theories rather than to empower people (Nicholson et al., 2016).

The research study, *“Research on Social Media Reliability,”* by Margarita Isoraite and Daiva Aktas, examines people's perceptions of the veracity of information on social media, including the variables that affect people's capacity to differentiate between trustworthy and untrustworthy information, as well as the variations in how people select social media platforms and share information that has been classified as either reliable or untrustworthy. The study used quantitative research. Most (62.2%) said they were confident in their ability to tell trustworthy information from untrustworthy. Practices like self-analysis, using common sense, encouraging critical thinking, and having faith in their judgment were the sources of their confidence. Nonetheless, according to 45% of respondents, evaluating the accuracy of information found on social media is impossible. They blamed this on alleged biases in the data and discrepancies in the methods used to conduct the research that produced the material. In addition, a sizable majority (80.2%) stated that they don't post news items on their social media profiles. This hesitation was mostly brought on by the lack of reliable links and authoritative sources, which made them believe that information from social media was untrustworthy (Ibrahim et al., 2024).

The paper, *“Role of Social Media on Development,”* investigates the function and effects of social media on development, with a focus on information sharing, professional networking, and economic expansion. The study's methodology consisted of surveying 100 participants, which was subsequently lowered to 98 after two people who didn't use social media were eliminated. According to the analysis, the most in demand social media sites are Twitter, Facebook, LiveJournal, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Orkut. This demonstrates the important role social media plays in promoting academic and professional growth, which indirectly supports economic expansion. People use these platforms for a variety of reasons, including finding information, getting opinions, amusement, interacting with others, maintaining friendships,

sharing personal stories, and obtaining freebies (D.P, A., & C.O, P., 2014).

In the study conducted by Umuze N Anthonia & et al, *“X-Raying the Positive-Negative Effects of Social Media Networks on Young Persons: The Mediating Role of Media House in Nigeria”* shows that today's youth find themselves deeply entangled in the web of social media, much like moths drawn to a flame. The challenge of addressing excessive social media use isn't just difficult, it's like trying to catch water with a sieve. Particularly in Nigeria, they are witnessing the moral fabric slowly unravelling, thread by thread. This decline isn't happening in isolation; it's a perfect storm created by three key factors: the breakdown of their traditional social structures, the weakening of family bonds, and the ongoing challenges in Nigerian governance. Think of it like a three-legged stool. When all three legs are wobbling, no amount of fixing just one will keep it stable. The young population are navigating to a digital world through platforms like WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, often without a compass or map to guide them. It's not just about one institution stepping in to "fix" the problem, be it schools, families, or government. The challenge is too complex, too deeply rooted for any single entity to tackle alone. (Edih et al, 2022)

Another study published in 2022, *“The impact of social media on executive functions: Beneficial or harmful?”* stated, Modern digital technology is reshaping the way people think, focus, and process information—but not always for the better. This research highlights the real risks that come with excessive social media use, especially when it turns into a compulsive habit. While moderate use might offer some benefits, the reality is that many people go far beyond that, leading to scattered attention, weakened decision-making skills, and information overload. As social media becomes more addictive and deeply embedded in daily lives, it's crucial to set clear boundaries and find ways to protect the cognitive well-being. Younger generations, in particular, are growing up with unprecedented levels of exposure, making it more important than ever to raise awareness and implement safeguards. If we ignore these risks, we could see a widespread decline in essential cognitive functions. Since digital integration is here to stay, the focus shouldn't be on eliminating social media but on using it wisely. By understanding these impacts and taking steps to

manage them, we can help preserve healthy brain function in an increasingly online world. (Ma, 2022)

Arif Gulfam, a researcher from Pakistan quoted in his research that excessive social media use poses significant risks to cognitive functioning, including impaired executive functions, reduced attention spans, and increased susceptibility to information overload. While moderate use may offer some benefits, most users exceed the optimal threshold, leading to cognitive strain. The addictive nature of social media, especially among younger generations, underscores the need for clear usage guidelines and intervention strategies. As digital integration deepens, addressing these cognitive risks is essential to safeguarding brain health and maintaining optimal cognitive development. (Gulfam, Majeed, & Rafique, 2021).

The paper, *“Role of Social Media in Adolescent-Parent Relationships Among At-Risk Youths,”* investigates the relationship between at-risk adolescents and their parents, the impact of social media use on the reported at-risk behaviors of adolescents, and the effects on the parent-adolescent relationship. Using a qualitative interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) methodology, six pairs of teenagers and their parents participated in semi-structured interviews. In-person or Zoom interviews were used, and the teen was interviewed first, followed right away by the parent. The interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes, and the small sample size of 6 pairs was caused by the focused nature of the parent-adolescent communication and the IPA methodology recommendation, which resulted in a rapid saturation point. Teenagers' use of social media continued even after they encountered negative content, suggesting that these experiences did not significantly discourage their use. It was discovered that parents rarely kept an eye on their children's social media usage, primarily because they were unfamiliar with social media sites and technology (Davis & Hart, 2023).

Another research paper, *“Impact of Social Media on Indian Youth with Special Reference to Covid-19,”* examines the substantial influence that social media has on Indian youth's lives, both positively and negatively, with a significance on the harm that excessive social media usage can do to one's mental and physical health. Numerous aspects of people's lives are significantly impacted by social media,

providing notable advantages in fields like communication, entertainment, and education. However, there are also significant drawbacks, especially for young individuals whose mental and physical health is more vulnerable to social media addiction. The dual-edged nature of social media in modern society is highlighted by the fact that excessive use of these platforms has been connected to several mental health issues, like anxiety, depression, eating disorders, insomnia, and a heightened sense of isolation (Singh, 2020).

#### Theoretical Framework

The integration of Uses and Gratifications Theory and Diffusion of Innovation theory establishes a comprehensive theoretical framework for analyzing social media and its negative impact on the people in rural areas. These frameworks were identified for their mutually reinforcing theoretical perspectives on user interaction, communication flows, and behavioural evolution which are critical components for examining social media's influence in the negative effects of social media.

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) discussed on how people used media to fulfill specific needs such as information, education, entertainment. UGT theory highlighted the dynamic role of the audience in media consumption. Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973) theorised that media users choose media platforms based on their personal goals and the gratification they seek. UGT showed that understanding these choices can reveal deeper insights into media effects. Later, researches have expanded the UGT theory to include digital and social media platforms (Ruggiero, 2000).

Everett Roger's (1962) Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) theory, proved how new ideas or technologies spread within a social system. DOI identified five adopter categories: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. DOI theory showed reasons that influence adoption, such as observed benefits, compatibility, and testing of the innovations. The theory also DOI also stressed on communication channels and social networks. (Rogers, 2003).

#### Research Gap:

Many studies have looked at how social media is used in India. However, only little is known about how social media negatively impacts rural Indian

communities. Few studies have looked closely at how social media might harm societal behaviours. Most research highlights the benefits of digital interventions. It also looks at social media effects. However, it often overlooks the specific challenges faced by rural communities. Rural areas face unique challenges that can worsen issues. These factors include low digital skills, lack of access to fact-checking tools, and traditional beliefs that conflict with information available online. Most digital health studies focus on urban areas or make nationwide claims. They often miss the cultural, educational, and infrastructure factors that affect how rural communities use and respond to social media. Rural India has different levels of media literacy, language diversity, and internet access. These factors make people more vulnerable to misinformation. This research gap shows the need for a careful study. We must look at how social media may harm people, especially in rural India. This research could give important insights. It can help create protective policies and educational programs for rural communities.

#### METHODOLOGY

This study used a structured questionnaire survey to look at how social media harms rural communities. The questionnaire was the main tool for collecting data. It included both structured and semi-structured questions. These questions aimed to gather insights about the challenges social media creates in rural areas. Questionnaires play a vital role in quantitative research. They help gather important data on specific topics. Well-designed and well-implemented studies show how social media misuse, misinformation, and digital dependencies affect groups, individuals, or populations (Roopa & Rani, 2012). This study recorded responses using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Never to 5 = Always). The researcher and trained enumerators did in-person interviews to collect data from participants with various literacy levels.

The target population included adults aged 18 to 60 years from villages and towns in Kolar, Tumkur, Vijayapura, and Ramanagara. These districts were chosen because they are typical rural communities. This makes them ideal for studying the disruptive effects of social media. The researcher used purposive sampling to choose participants who knew about social media and experienced its negative effects. This approach aimed at people dealing with problems such as digital misinformation, social

media addiction, online scams, and political manipulation. Purposive sampling helps keep data relevant and research strong. It picks participants whose experiences fit the study's goals well (Campbell et al., 2020). Social media is less common in rural areas than in cities. So, this method was key to getting valuable insights from users who often use these platforms. To reduce selection bias, we included a diverse group of participants. This group varied in backgrounds, professions, and ages. This way, we gained a clearer view of how social media harms rural communities.

The data was gathered as part of a Minor Research Project (MRP) on the "Role of Social Media in Development."

#### Research Objectives:

1. To examine the impact of social media on face-to-face communication.
2. To assess the effects of social media on work-life balance.
3. To evaluate the influence of social media on mental health and well-being.
4. To analyze the role of social media in influencing traditional values and cultural practices.
5. To investigate concerns related to privacy and security on social media platforms.
6. To explore the role of social media in the spread of fake news and misinformation.

#### Limitations of the study

The current study faced several constraints. Due to time and financial limitations, it covered only four districts in Karnataka. The participant pool included both frequent and occasional social media users, leading to varying usage patterns.

Despite improvements in digital infrastructure, rural India still experiences significant internet connectivity disparities. Many remote areas lack stable mobile networks, affordable data plans, or any internet access at all. These gaps in access and digital literacy make it difficult to fully understand the harmful effects of social media on rural communities. Focusing on four districts in Karnataka may limit the generalizability of the findings, as rural India is diverse, with numerous dialects and regional languages.

Social media platforms, being largely unregulated, can rapidly spread misinformation. This is

particularly problematic in rural areas, where users often lack the resources to verify information independently and rely heavily on their personal networks. This dependency can lead to confusion, polarization, and harmful behaviors, making it difficult to distinguish between the different negative impacts of social media.

Response bias is another limitation, as participants may have provided subjective or socially desirable answers on the questionnaire.

By studying four different districts, the research aimed to identify common patterns in social media's disruptive effects, such as weakening traditional communication and community bonds, as well as influencing personal relationships and mental well-being. While the impact may vary across regions, the overarching goal was to highlight the broader challenges rural communities face in adapting to the digital age.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

**Demographic profile of the respondents:** The data was collected from 502 respondents; with 140 respondents from Tumakuru, 120 respondents from Kolar, and 121 respondents each from Ramanagara and Vijayapura.

The age wise distribution of the 502 respondents; 158 respondents were aged 18-25 years, while 100 were aged 26-30 years, another 89 were aged 31-35 years, other 67 were aged 36-40 years, another 47 were aged 41-45 years, another 33 were aged 46-50 years, and only 8 were aged 51 years and above. There were 314 male respondents and 188 females. The educational qualifications of the 502 respondents are as follows: 16.93% had no formal education, 10.56% completed primary school, 13.94% completed high school, 32.87% completed PUC, 22.31% were graduates, and only 3.39% had post-graduation qualification. The marital status of the respondents was: 342 were married, while 160 were single. The employment distribution was: 88 were students, 243 were employed, 51 were unemployed, and 120 were self-employed. Among the 243 employed respondents, 25 worked in government service, 174 were in the private sector, and 44 were involved in business.

### Negative Effects of Social Media

**Face-to-face communication:** A majority, 65.94% (53.39%+12.55%) (n=331 (268+63)) of the respondents believed that social media did not negatively impact their face-to-face interactions (See Table 1). This suggests that many individuals use social media as a supplementary tool of communication rather than a replacement. For them, social media primarily serves as a platform to build new connections, or maintain distant relationships without compromising in-person interactions. On the other hand, 34.06% (17.53%+16.53%+0) (n=171 (88+83+0)) of respondents reported that social media does impact their face-to-face interactions. This effect could stem from reduced in-person communication due to increased time spent online or a reliance on digital communication.

Regional data reveals contrasting perspectives on social media's impact on face-to-face interactions. Tumakuru reported the highest concern, with 22.31% (n=112) of respondents stating that social media hinders face-to-face communication. In contrast, Kolar had no respondents (n=0) expressing this concern, suggesting a more positive perception of social media as a communication tool in that region. (See Table 1) These findings highlight that social media is largely seen as a supportive medium for communication by rural communities, yet a significant portion consider it a barrier to meaningful face-to-face interaction.

**Work-Life balance:** The collected data reveals a nearly even split in opinions regarding social media's impact on work-life balance. While 50.40% (45.42%+4.98) (n=253 (228+25)) of the respondents did not believe social media negatively affects their work-life balance, the other 49.60% (8.17%+40.44%+1.0%) (n=249 (41+203+5)) reported that it does have an adverse effect (See Table 1). This highlights a complex relationship between social media usage and life experiences of individuals.

Among the four districts, Tumakuru reported the highest number of respondents 27.49% (n=138) stating that social media disrupts their work-life balance. (See Table 1) "Social media leads to too much screen time, making it hard to balance work and personal life," said a respondent. However, none of the respondents (n=0) from Kolar expressed such concern.

Social media can serve as a beneficial tool for quick communication, entertainment, or staying updated

without disrupting the professional and personal lives of individuals. However, attributes like excessive screen time or constant connectivity can blur the boundaries between work and personal life, leading to stress or imbalance.

*Mental health and well-being:* There is also a near-equal divide in perceptions of social media's portrayal of idealized lifestyles and unrealistic standards on users' mental health and well-being. While 50.40% (45.62%+4.78%) (n=253 (229+24)) of the respondents reported no adverse effect on their mental health and well-being, 49.60% (6.57%+42.43%+0.60%) (n=249 (33+213+3)) acknowledged that such portrayals had negatively impacted them (See Table 1). Constant exposure to artificial and unrealistic depictions of happiness, success, and physical appearance can lead to social comparison and a sense of inferiority. These effects can manifest in various ways, including feelings of self-doubt, low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and body dysmorphia.

Across regions, Tumakuru had the highest number of respondents, 27.49% (n=138), that reported social media negatively affects their mental health whereas no respondents (n=0) from Kolar expressed this concern. These findings underscore the need for further exploration into regional differences in digital well-being.

*Traditional Values and Cultural Practices:* A significant majority, 77.29% (35.46%+41.83%+0) (n=388 (178+210+0)), of respondents agreed that social media has negatively influenced traditional values and cultural practices. The remaining 22.71% (20.52%+2.19%) (n=114 (103+11)) of respondents denied such an impact. (See Table 1) The impact on traditions and culture can be in both positive and negative ways. Social media platforms often serve as a bridge, enabling individuals to discover diverse cultural practices while also providing a space to promote their own traditions. For instance, festivals, rituals, and cultural values are actively shared and celebrated on social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram. In contrast to this, social media can contribute to cultural hegemony by promoting globalised, modern lifestyles that may diminish or overshadow local traditions and practices.

The dual impact of social media on traditional values and culture is further evident across regions.

Tumakuru had the highest proportion of respondents, 27.49% (n=138), who reported that social media negatively influences cultural and traditional norms, suggesting a heightened perception of cultural shifts or erosion in this region. In contrast, only 1.59% (n=8) of respondents from Ramanagara shared this concern, indicating that the majority did not perceive social media as a threat to traditional values. (See Table 1)

*Privacy and security:* A substantial 76.89% (36.65%+40.24%+0) (n=386 (184+202+0)) of the respondents agreed that social media has compromised their privacy and security, particularly due to the misuse of personal information. A smaller portion of 23.11% (20.92%+2.19%) (n=116 (105+11)) of respondents did not report experiencing such an impact. (See Table 1)

Regionally, Tumakuru had the highest number of respondents, 27.49% (n=138), that expressed social media compromises their privacy and security while Ramanagara had the least number of respondents expressing such concern i.e., 1.39% (n=7). (See Table 1)

The majority consensus indicates significant concerns about the safety of personal data, including names, addresses, contact details, financial information, and personal photos, shared on social media among rural communities. Issues such as unauthorized access, identity theft, and phishing are common challenges faced by users which can lead to financial losses, reputational damage, and emotional distress.

*Fake news and rumours:* Most of the respondents i.e., 67.73% (47.18%+19.72%+0.20%) (n=340 (240+99+1)), believed that social media contributes to the spread of fake news or rumours. While the remaining 32.27% (21.31%+10.96%) (n=162 (107+55)) of respondents did not share this view, the clear majority emphasizes the link between social media and the increase of false or misleading information on social media. (See Table 1)

Additionally, Vijayapura had the highest proportion of respondents, 24.10% (n=121), who agreed that social media promotes fake news and rumours, it was closely followed by Kolar with 23.90% (n=120) respondents expressing the same concern. While Ramanagara had the least number of respondents 0.80% (n=4) who believed social media contributes to fake news. (See Table 1)

A respondent affirmed, “Fake news spreads particularly fast on social media due to its vast reach and instant sharing capabilities.” Social media platforms lack robust fact-checking mechanisms,

allowing users to share unverified content, thereby leading to misinformation reaching wide audiences within moments. This can create panic, distort public opinion, and lead to erosion of trust.

Table 1: Negative effects of social media

District	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Face-to-face Communication</b>										
Ramanagara	105	20.92	13	2.59	3	0.60	0	0.00	0	0.00
Tumakuru	0	0.00	28	5.58	35	6.97	77	15.34	0	0.00
Kolar	120	23.90	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Vijayapura	43	8.57	22	4.38	50	9.96	6	1.20	0	0.00
Total	268	53.39	63	12.55	88	17.53	83	16.53	0	0.00
<b>Work-life Balance</b>										
Ramanagara	104	20.72	11	2.19	5	1.00	0	0.00	1	0.20
Tumakuru	0	0.00	2	0.40	19	3.78	118	23.51	1	0.20
Kolar	120	23.90	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Vijayapura	4	0.80	12	2.39	17	3.39	85	16.93	3	0.60
Total	228	45.42	25	4.98	41	8.17	203	40.44	5	1.00
<b>Mental Health and Well-being</b>										
Ramanagara	102	20.32	13	2.59	6	1.20	0	0.00	0	0.00
Tumakuru	0	0.00	2	0.40	8	1.59	129	25.70	1	0.20
Kolar	120	23.90	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Vijayapura	7	1.39	9	1.79	19	3.78	84	16.73	2	0.40
Total	229	45.62	24	4.78	33	6.57	213	42.43	3	0.60
<b>Traditional Values and Cultural Practices</b>										
Ramanagara	102	20.32	11	2.19	8	1.59	0	0.00	0	0.00
Tumakuru	0	0.00	0	0.00	6	1.20	134	26.69	0	0.00
Kolar	0	0.00	0	0.00	120	23.90	0	0.00	0	0.00
Vijayapura	1	0.20	0	0.00	44	8.76	76	15.14	0	0.00
Total	103	20.52	11	2.19	178	35.46	210	41.83	0	0.00
<b>Privacy and Security</b>										
Ramanagara	105	20.92	9	1.79	7	1.39	0	0.00	0	0.00
Tumakuru	0	0.00	2	0.40	13	2.59	125	24.90	0	0.00
Kolar	0	0.00	0	0.00	113	22.51	7	1.39	0	0.00
Vijayapura	0	0.00	0	0.00	51	10.16	70	13.94	0	0.00
Total	105	20.92	11	2.19	184	36.65	202	40.24	0	0.00
<b>Fake News and Rumours</b>										
Ramanagara	107	21.31	10	1.99	3	0.60	0	0.00	1	0.20
Tumakuru	0	0.00	45	8.96	13	2.59	82	16.33	0	0.00
Kolar	0	0.00	0	0.00	120	23.90	0	0.00	0	0.00
Vijayapura	0	0.00	0	0.00	104	20.72	17	3.39	0	0.00
Total	107	21.31	55	10.96	240	47.81	99	19.72	1	0.20

MAJOR FINDINGS

- Around 34.06% of rural social media users stated social media negatively affects face-to-face interactions.
- More than half of the respondents, i.e., 50.40% of the respondents reported that using social media did not impact their work-life balance,

while 49.60% reported social media usage disrupted their work-life balance.

- More than half of the respondents 50.40% rural social media users experienced no impact on mental health, whereas 49.60% were negatively affected by social media's portrayal of unrealistic

standards, leading to potential issues like anxiety or depression.

- A majority of 77.29% respondents agreed that social media influences their perception of traditional values and cultural practices, with both positive (promoting cultural exchange) and negative (eroding local traditions) impacts.
- A significant number of respondents 76.89% of rural social media users expressed concerns about privacy and security due to misuse of personal data.
- About 67.73% of respondents believed that social media contributes to the spread of fake news and rumours.

### CONCLUSION

While social media offers numerous benefits to rural residents, it also presents several negative effects that warrant attention. Increased online activity can reduce face-to-face interactions, impacting personal relationships. The constant connectivity often blurs the line between work and personal life, leading to poor work-life balance. Furthermore, exposure to idealized lifestyles on social media can lead to mental health issues like low self-esteem, anxiety, and unhealthy comparisons among social media users. Social media's influence on cultural practices is another concern, as it can both promote cultural exchange and lead to the erosion of local traditions. Privacy and security are significant issues, with personal data misuse and the rapid spread of misinformation posing threats to individuals and communities, moreover, the economic impact of digital platforms cannot be overlooked. While they offer rural businesses the chance to expand and access broader markets, these platforms also pose challenges that force businesses to adapt to a digital economy. These insights help shape policies that ensure rural communities reap the benefits of digital advancements while safeguarding mental health, cultural heritage, privacy, and economic stability in the face of the digital divide. In conclusion, while the digital transformation presents opportunities for rural communities, it also brings about challenges that require urgent attention. The mental health impact on rural youth, driven by social comparison, digital peer pressure, and the pressure to conform to urban lifestyles, is a pressing concerns rural areas navigate this digital shift, concerns about privacy and security are amplified, as the spread of misinformation

bypasses traditional methods of verification and trust within the community.

### Scope For Future Studies:

Future research can explore these negative issues of social media across India to ensure a national study. Additionally, longitudinal studies could examine the long-term negative effects of social media on rural communities, tracking changes in behaviours, information consumption patterns, and psychological well-being over extended periods. A comparative analysis between urban and rural areas could provide valuable insights into how social media's negative effects manifest differently across these environments. This approach would help identify specific vulnerabilities in rural settings and inform targeted interventions to address problems like addiction, cyberbullying, and the spread of misinformation. Such expanded research would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and could guide the development of sustainable solutions to mitigate social media's harmful effects in rural India.

### Funding Information

This research work was supported by Jain (Deemed-to-be) University, under the Grant for minor research projects.

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