

## Social Media Addiction and Its Impact on the Well-Being of Adolescent Girls in Rural Andhra Pradesh

Col. P.S. Reddy<sup>1</sup>; Prof. Saraswati Raju Iyer<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Centre for Women Studies, Acharya Nagarjuna University, Andhra Pradesh, India

<sup>2</sup>Professor, Department of Sociology & Social Work, Acharya Nagarjuna University, Andhra Pradesh, India

Corresponding Author Email: [baluinidm@gmail.com](mailto:baluinidm@gmail.com)

**Abstract**— The rapid expansion of digital technology and affordable internet access has significantly increased social media use among adolescents, including those in rural areas. This study examines the prevalence of social media addiction and its impact on the well-being of adolescent girls in rural Andhra Pradesh. Using a quantitative descriptive research design, data were collected from 400 adolescent girls through structured interviews and focused group discussions across four administrative zones of the state. The findings reveal a considerable level of problematic social media use, with many respondents reporting anxiety when unable to access social media, difficulty controlling usage, and a continuous desire to remain connected. Social media use was also found to occur during various daily activities such as traveling, studying, and interacting with family and friends, indicating a strong integration of digital engagement into everyday life. The study further identifies several consequences of excessive use, including disruptions in sleep patterns, reduced study time, decreased family interaction, and delays in routine activities. In addition, a portion of respondents reported experiencing physical health issues such as eye strain and hand pain, as well as mental health concerns including lack of concentration, anxiety, and irritability. Exposure to online threats such as fake accounts, unsolicited messages, and cyber harassment was also noted. Overall, the findings highlight the need for targeted digital literacy programs, awareness initiatives, and support systems to encourage safe, balanced, and responsible social media use among adolescent girls in rural communities.

**Keywords:** Social media, addiction, wellbeing, adolescent girls

---

### I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital technologies and affordable internet access has significantly transformed the everyday lives of young people across the world. Social media platforms have become an important medium for communication, entertainment, and information sharing, particularly among adolescents. In recent years, rural areas have also witnessed a significant increase in smartphone ownership and internet accessibility, narrowing the digital divide between urban and rural populations. In rural Andhra Pradesh, adolescent girls are increasingly engaging with social media platforms as part of their daily routines.

This study examines the phenomenon of social media addiction among adolescent girls in rural Andhra Pradesh by analyzing patterns of use, engagement during daily activities, and the associated consequences on their health, education, and social interactions. By exploring these dimensions, the study aims to contribute to the growing discourse on digital well-being and provide insights for developing effective awareness and intervention strategies to promote responsible and balanced social media use among rural adolescents.

### II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the prevalence and patterns of social media addiction among adolescent girls in rural Andhra Pradesh.

- To analyze the impact of excessive social media use on the physical health, mental well-being, and educational progress of adolescent girls.
- To explore how social media addiction influences daily activities and social relationships among adolescent girls in rural communities.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLING

This study adopted a quantitative descriptive research design to examine the patterns, influences, and impact of social media use among adolescent girls in rural Andhra Pradesh. The research focused on identifying types of social media platforms used, frequency and duration of usage, device access, and the effects on daily life. The study was conducted across the four administrative zones of Andhra Pradesh, covering 26 districts, and employed a multi-stage simple random sampling method. One district from each zone was randomly selected, followed by the random selection of a block and a village panchayat.

From these areas, a total of 400 adolescent girls aged 17–19 years were surveyed, with 100 respondents from each zone. Data were collected using structured interview schedules, which included four sections covering demographic and socio-economic characteristics, social media usage patterns, its impact on routine life, and threats or challenges faced. The interview schedules were prepared in the local language, pre-tested with 20 respondents, and refined based on field challenges. Secondary data on adolescent populations and administrative divisions were obtained from Anganwadi Centres, government records, journals, books, and online sources. In addition, focused group discussions were conducted using a standard checklist to gain deeper insights into the experiences and perceptions of the respondents.

### IV. DATA ANALYSIS INTERPRETATION

#### IV.I. DEMOGRAPHY OF RESPONDENTS

The age distribution of adolescent girls in the study reveals that the majority (44 percent) of them fall into the late adolescence category (17–19 years), followed by 37 percent in middle adolescence (14–16 years), and only 19 percent in early adolescence (10–13 years). This skew towards older adolescents suggests a higher likelihood of social media exposure and usage, as previous studies indicate that the digital engagement tends to increase with age due to greater autonomy, peer influence, and access to mobile devices (Patil & Sawant, 2020).

**Table 1:** Age profile

Types of adolescents	Frequency	Percent
10-13 Years: Early	77	19
14-16 Years: Middle	146	37
17-19 Years: Late	177	44
Total	400	100

#### IV.II. THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION

The findings reveal a significant prevalence of problematic social media use among adolescent girls in rural Andhra Pradesh, with 72 percent reporting anxiety when unable to access social media and 70 percent indicating difficulty in controlling its use. A substantial proportion (69 percent) engage with social media even in inappropriate situations, while 67 percent report a continuous desire to stay connected, reflecting signs of behavioral addiction. The data also show that 63 percent have experienced

adverse consequences, and 70 percent feel a compulsion to use social media, indicating impaired self-regulation. These patterns align with global concerns regarding the psychological impacts of excessive social media engagement among adolescents, particularly in low-resource settings where alternative recreational opportunities are limited (Keles, McCrae, & Grealish, 2020). The high levels of compulsive use and emotional dependency underscore the need for targeted mental health interventions and digital literacy programs in rural India to mitigate the risks associated with digital overexposure.

**Table 2:** The Impact of Social Media Addiction

	Yes		No		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Feel anxious	288	72	112	28	400	100
Replace contact	290	72	110	28	400	100
Need Compulsive	253	63	147	37	400	100
inappropriate situations	275	69	125	31	400	100
Continuous Desire	270	67	130	33	400	100
Difficult to control	282	70	118	30	400	100
Feel relax or negative emotion	208	52	192	48	400	100
feel compulsion	279	70	121	30	400	100
Consequences experience	252	63	148	37	400	100

## IV.II. SOCIAL MEDIA USE DURING DAILY ACTIVITIES

The data indicate pervasive social media use among adolescent girls in rural Andhra Pradesh, with 70 percent accessing platforms within the first 30 minutes of waking—an early indicator of habitual engagement. Furthermore, a notable proportion of girls use social media during daily activities that traditionally require focus or interpersonal engagement. For instance, 61 percent use it while traveling, 57 percent while chatting with friends, 33 percent while being with parents, and 46 percent while in bed. Alarming, 16 percent to 33 percent report using social media during brushing, dressing, writing, watching TV, and even while studying or attending classes. Such patterns point to a blurred boundary between digital and real-world interactions, potentially disrupting concentration, reducing productivity, and impairing social development. This behavior is consistent with findings from global literature suggesting that frequent, context-inappropriate social media use may negatively impact adolescents’ cognitive, emotional, and social functioning (Andreassen et al., 2017). The results emphasize the urgent need for awareness campaigns and behavioral interventions in rural communities to promote mindful digital consumption.

**Table 3:** Social Media Use During Daily Activities

	Yes		No		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Brushing	63	16	337	84	400	100
Wash room	46	12	354	88	400	100
Dressing	62	16	338	84	400	100
Having food	117	29	283	71	400	100
Travelling	246	61	154	39	400	100
During class	64	16	336	84	400	100
Chatting with friends	229	57	171	43	400	100
While working	84	21	316	79	400	100
Walking	131	33	269	67	400	100
Reading	102	26	298	74	400	100
Writing	127	32	273	68	400	100
Watching TV	130	33	270	67	400	100
Being with parents	133	33	267	67	400	100
Being with relatives	110	28	290	72	400	100
At Bed	183	46	217	54	400	100

#### IV.IV. IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

Over half (52 percent) of the adolescent girls in the study reported that social media use has negatively affected their educational progress. This suggests that for a significant proportion of rural adolescents, the time and attention devoted to social platforms may be interfering with academic responsibilities and performance. The nearly even split also reflects a growing concern about digital distractions in learning environments, especially in underserved rural areas where academic support systems may already be limited. Prior research supports this concern, indicating that excessive social media use can impair academic achievement by reducing study time, fragmenting attention, and encouraging procrastination (Junco, 2012). These findings highlight the need for

targeted digital literacy programs in rural settings to foster balanced technology use that supports rather than hinders educational outcomes.

#### IV.V. CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED DUE TO SOCIAL MEDIA USE

**Table 4:** Challenges Experienced Due to Social Media Use

	Yes		No		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Increased in spending time in wash room	55	14	345	86	400	100
Reduced time of taking bath	45	11	355	89	400	100
Avoiding bathing	59	15	341	85	400	100
Nor properly brushing	39	10	361	90	400	100
Avoiding food	78	20	322	80	400	100
Delayed breakfast/lunch/dinner	71	18	329	82	400	100
Reduced time of reading	109	27	291	73	400	100
Reduced time of preparing for exam	107	27	293	73	400	100
Reduced time spending with parents	104	26	296	74	400	100
Reduced time spending with siblings	89	22	311	78	400	100
Reduced time spending with neighbors	97	24	303	76	400	100
Reduced time spending with friends	84	21	316	79	400	100
Reduced time of sleep	109	27	291	73	400	100
Late wake up	102	26	298	74	400	100

Late sleep	126	32	274	68	400	100
Not getting deep sleep	77	19	323	81	400	100
Late going to school	70	18	330	82	400	100
Boarded in wrong bus	54	14	346	86	400	100
Missed bus stop	68	17	332	83	400	100

The data reveals that a substantial number of adolescent girls in rural Andhra Pradesh are experiencing lifestyle disruptions due to social media use. Notably, 32 percent reported going to bed late, and 27 percent experienced reduced sleep and less time for reading or exam preparation. These patterns point to a displacement of essential daily activities such as studying, eating, and sleeping—by time spent on social media. Furthermore, 26 percent reported late wake-ups, and 18 percent admitted to being late to school, indicating potential academic and health consequences. These findings align with previous research suggesting that excessive screen time can interfere with daily routines and mental well-being, leading to sleep deprivation, impaired academic performance, and reduced family interaction (Keles, McCrae, & Grealish, 2020). The extent of behavioral and lifestyle disruptions underscores the urgent need for awareness programs and structured digital hygiene education for adolescents in rural settings.

#### IV.VI. IMPACT AND SEVERITY OF PROBLEMS DUE TO SOCIAL MEDIA USE

**Table 5:** Impact and Severity of Problems Due to Social Media Use

	Less		Medium		High		Very High		Total	
	Fre.	Per cent	Frequ ency	Per cent	Frequ ency	Per cent	Frequ ency	Per cent	Frequ ency	Per cent
Increased in spending time in wash room	317	79	50	13	5	1	28	7	400	100
Reduced time of taking bath	292	73	68	17	6	2	34	8	400	100
Avoiding bathing	310	77	45	11	3	1	42	11	400	100
Nor properly brushing	293	73	61	15	3	1	43	11	400	100
Avoiding food	298	74	54	15	5	1	43	11	400	100
Delayed breakfast/lunch/dinner	284	71	67	17	7	2	42	10	400	100
Reduced time of reading	275	69	73	18	16	4	36	9	400	100

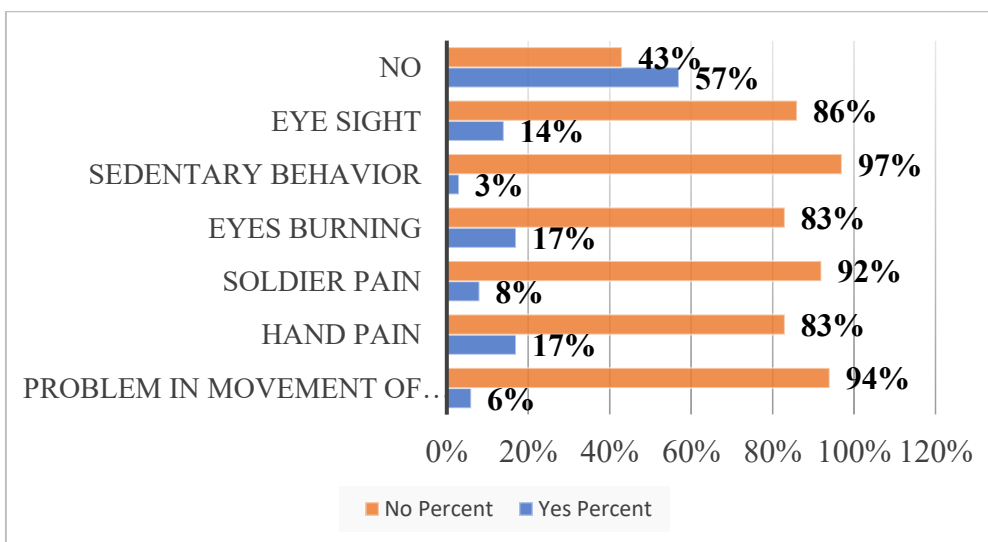
Reduced time of preparing for exam	257	64	87	22	13	3	43	11	400	100
Reduced time spending with parents	279	70	65	16	15	4	41	10	400	100
Reduced time spending with siblings	270	67	78	20	8	2	44	11	400	100
Reduced time spending with neighbors	281	70	69	17	8	2	42	11	400	100
Reduced time spending with friends	273	68	74	19	11	3	42	10	400	100
Reduced time of sleep	279	70	69	17	5	1	47	12	400	100
Late wake up	281	70	70	18	12	3	37	9	400	100
Late sleep	282	70	95	24	14	4	9	2	400	100
Not getting deep sleep	288	72	63	16	10	2	39	10	400	100
Late going to school	300	75	53	13	6	2	41	10	400	100
Boarded in wrong bus	297	74	50	13	9	2	44	11	400	100
Missed bus stop	301	75	49	12	7	2	43	11	400	100

The findings indicate that while a majority of adolescent girls in rural Andhra Pradesh reported only a *low to medium* intensity of problems due to social media usage, a non-negligible portion experienced *high to very high* levels of disruption in their daily lives. For instance, although 79 percent reported minimal issues regarding increased time in the washroom, 7 percent still indicated a very high impact. Similarly, significant concerns were raised in academic and social domains: 11 percent faced high or very high disruption in exam preparation, and around 10–12 percent experienced severe issues like reduced sleep, delayed meals, and less family interaction. These results suggest a growing digital dependency that, while not overwhelming for most, has severe consequences for a critical minority. This reflects broader global concerns about the addictive design of social media platforms and their capacity to impair youth’s daily functioning and emotional regulation (Andreassen et al., 2017). Targeted digital literacy and wellness programs are needed to address this hidden intensity of harm among vulnerable adolescent populations.

#### IV.VII. PHYSICAL HEALTH PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED DUE TO SOCIAL MEDIA USE

In this study of adolescent girls in rural Andhra Pradesh, 28 percent of respondents reported experiencing physical health problems due to social media use. Among these, hand pain (17 percent) and eye burning (17 percent) were the most frequently reported issues, followed by eye strain or vision problems (14 percent), shoulder pain (8 percent), and finger movement difficulties (6 percent). These findings align with broader research showing that prolonged screen time, poor posture, and

repetitive hand movements contribute to musculoskeletal pain and visual strain among adolescents (Rosen et al., 2014). Although the majority did not report such issues, the symptoms experienced by a significant minority highlight the physical toll of excessive digital engagement. These symptoms not only affect comfort and well-being but also have the potential to interfere with academic and social functioning, especially in rural settings where access to ergonomic education and eye care may be limited. Interventions focusing on safe digital practices and physical health awareness are essential to mitigate these emerging health concerns



**Figure 1:** Physical Health Problems Experienced Due to Social Media Use

#### IV.VIII. IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE ON MENTAL HEALTH

The study reveals that 39 percent of adolescent girls in rural Andhra Pradesh reported experiencing at least one mental health issue related to social media use. The most commonly cited concerns include lack of concentration (18 percent), anxiety (10 percent), anger (10 percent), and irritability (7 percent). Other reported effects such as sadness, frustration, feelings of inferiority, and mood alterations were noted by a smaller percentage (3–5 percent). These findings resonate with existing literature, which links excessive social media use to deteriorating mental health outcomes in adolescents, particularly through mechanisms such as social comparison, fear of missing out (FoMO), and cyberbullying (Keles, McCrae, & Grealish, 2020). Although the majority of respondents did not report mental health issues, the prevalence of emotional distress among a significant subset indicates a pressing need for awareness programs, digital literacy education, and mental health support in rural communities where access to psychological services may be limited.

**Table 6:** Impact of Social Media Use on Mental Health

	Yes		No		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Lack of concentration	71	18	329	82	400	100
Anxiety	39	10	361	90	400	100
Feeling inferiority	18	5	382	95	400	100

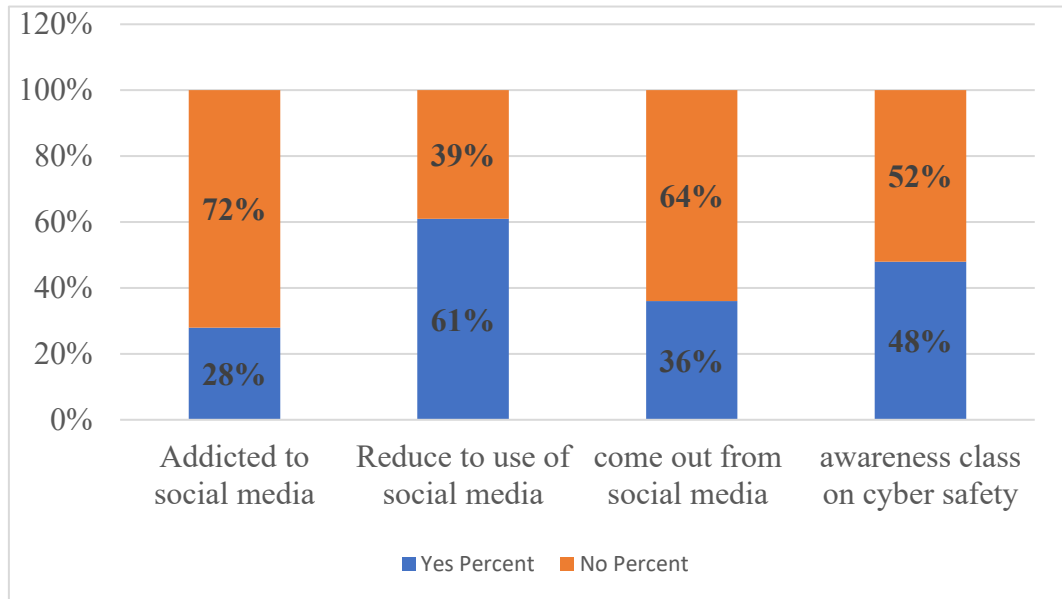
Unhappy with body shape	13	3	387	97	400	100
Social comparison	13	3	387	97	400	100
Anger	40	10	360	90	400	100
Irritability	29	7	371	93	400	100
Sadness	20	5	380	95	400	100
Mood alterations	21	5	379	95	400	100
Isolation	13	3	387	97	400	100
frustration	20	5	380	95	400	100
others	20	5	380	95	400	100
No	245	61	155	39	400	100

#### IV.IX. EXPERIENCE OF ONLINE ABUSE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

In this study, 18 percent of adolescent girls in rural Andhra Pradesh reported experiencing online abuse through social media platforms. This finding is concerning, as exposure to online abuse—including cyberbullying, harassment, and unsolicited messages—can have lasting psychological effects such as anxiety, fear, depression, and diminished self-esteem (Barlett et al., 2021). The relatively high percentage highlights a significant vulnerability among rural adolescent users who may lack access to digital literacy education, reporting mechanisms, or psychosocial support. Given the rising penetration of mobile internet in rural India, this underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions that promote safe online practices, build resilience among young users, and strengthen community and school-based support systems.

#### IV.X. PERCEIVED SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION AND NEED FOR SUPPORT AND AWARENESS

The study reveals that 28 percent of adolescent girls in rural Andhra Pradesh report being addicted to social media, indicating a notable but not overwhelming prevalence of addictive behaviors among this group. Interestingly, a majority of 61 percent have made efforts to reduce their social media use, and 36 percent have successfully come out from it, reflecting a level of self-awareness and active management of their digital habits. Additionally, nearly half (48 percent) of the respondents have attended awareness classes on cyber safety, underscoring the importance and reach of educational interventions aimed at promoting safer and more responsible social media use (Prasad & Reddy, 2023). These findings highlight both the challenges and the proactive steps being taken by adolescent girls to navigate the complexities of social media in rural settings.



**Figure 2:** Perceived Social Media Addiction and Need for Support and Awareness

## IV.XI. EXPOSURE TO THREATS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

**Table 7:** Exposure to Threats on Social Media

	Yes		No		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Mislead information	77	19	323	81	400	100
In appropriate content	69	17	331	83	400	100
Scam-Asked for money	83	21	317	79	400	100
Fake ID	90	23	310	77	400	100
Fake followers	100	25	300	75	400	100
Love Proposals	74	19	326	81	400	100
Sexual abuses	55	14	345	86	400	100
Morphing of photos	42	11	358	89	400	100

Calls from strangers	102	26	298	74	400	100
Friend request from Strangers	123	31	277	69	400	100
Bad comment	64	16	336	84	400	100

The study highlights that adolescent girls in rural Andhra Pradesh face a variety of online threats while using social media. Notably, 31 percent reported receiving friend requests from strangers, 26 percent experienced calls from strangers, and 25 percent encountered fake followers, indicating significant concerns about privacy and security. Additionally, 23 percent faced issues related to fake IDs, while 21 percent reported scams involving requests for money. Other reported threats include misleading information (19 percent), inappropriate content (17 percent), love proposals (19 percent), sexual abuses (14 percent), morphing of photos (11 percent), and receiving bad comments (16 percent). These findings underscore the vulnerability of adolescent girls to various online risks, emphasizing the need for targeted digital safety education and protective measures to ensure safer social media environments (Prasad & Reddy, 2023).

#### IV.XII. TYPES AND LEVELS OF THREATS FACED ON SOCIAL MEDIA

**Table 8:** Types and Levels of Threats Faced on Social Media

	Low		Medium		High		Very High		Total	
	Frequ ency	Perc ent	Frequ ency	Perc ent	Frequ ency	Perc ent	Frequ ency	Perc ent	Frequ ency	Perc ent
Mislead information	347	87	27	7	13	313	3		400	100
In appropriate content	328	82	38	10	21	5	13	3	400	100
Scam-Asked for money	327	82	34	8	27	7	12	3	400	100
Fake ID	305	76	50	12	31	8	14	4	400	100
Fake followers	306	77	48	12	33	8	13	3	400	100
Love Proposals	316	79	43	11	30	7	11	3	400	100
Sexual abuses	344	86	29	7	21	5	6	2	400	100
Morphing of photos	347	87	26	6	20	5	7	2	400	100
Calls from strangers	311	78	42	10	30	8	17	4	400	100
Friend request from Strangers	283	71	58	14	32	8	28	7	400	100

Bad comment	339	85	27	7	26	6	8	2	400	100
-------------	-----	----	----	---	----	---	---	---	-----	-----

The study reveals that the majority of adolescent girls in rural Andhra Pradesh perceive the level of threats faced on social media as low across various categories. For instance, 87 percent reported low levels of exposure to misleading information and morphing of photos, while 86 percent indicated low levels of sexual abuse threats. Similarly, low threat levels were reported for inappropriate content (82 percent), scams involving money (82 percent), fake IDs (76 percent), fake followers (77 percent), love proposals (79 percent), calls from strangers (78 percent), and bad comments (85 percent). However, a notable minority reported medium to very high levels of threat, particularly friend requests from strangers, where 29 percent reported medium to very high levels. These findings highlight that while the majority feel relatively safe, a significant portion of girls still experience considerable threats, underscoring the importance of ongoing digital literacy and protection programs tailored for rural adolescent girls (Prasad & Reddy, 2023).

#### IV.XIII. USE OF PRIVACY SETTINGS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The study found that a significant majority (67 percent) of adolescent girls in rural Andhra Pradesh reported enabling privacy settings on their social media accounts, indicating a growing awareness of online safety practices among this group. However, 33 percent of respondents had not enabled such settings, exposing them to potential risks such as privacy breaches and unwanted interactions. This highlights the need for increased education and support to encourage all users to adopt privacy measures, thereby enhancing their protection against digital threats in rural contexts (Prasad & Reddy, 2023).

#### V. CONCLUSION

The findings presented in this chapter underscore a dual-edged reality of social media use among adolescent girls in rural Andhra Pradesh. While many derive benefits such as entertainment, social connection, and access to health information, a significant portion faces adverse consequences including addictive behaviors, disrupted routines, mental health challenges, and physical ailments. The pervasive and compulsive nature of social media engagement, coupled with instances of online abuse and educational setbacks, signals a pressing need for comprehensive interventions. Efforts should focus on raising digital literacy, promoting mental health awareness, and encouraging balanced use to safeguard adolescents' overall development and well-being in rural communities increasingly influenced by digital technology.

#### REFERENCE

1. Patil S. and Sawant R., "Digital engagement and adolescent autonomy in social media use", 2020.
2. Keles B., McCrae N. and Grealish A., "A systematic review: the influence of social media on depression, anxiety and psychological distress in adolescents", *Int. J. Adolesc. Youth*, 25, pp. 79–93, 2020.
3. Andreassen C. S., Pallesen S. and Griffiths M. D., "The relationship between addictive use of social media, narcissism, and self-esteem", *Addictive Behaviors*, 64, pp. 287–293, 2017.
4. Junco R., "The relationship between frequency of Facebook use, participation in Facebook activities, and student engagement", *Computers & Education*, 58, pp. 162–171, 2012.
5. Rosen L. D., Lim A. F., Felt J., Carrier L. M., Cheever N. A., Lara-Ruiz J., Mendoza J. S. and Rökkum J., "Media and technology use predicts ill-being among children, preteens and teenagers independent of the negative health impacts of exercise and eating habits", *Computers in Human Behavior*, 35, pp. 364–375, 2014.
6. Barlett C. P., Simmers M. M., Roth B. and Gentile D. A., "Comparing cyberbullying prevalence and process before and during the COVID-19 pandemic", *Journal of Social Psychology*, 161, pp. 408–418, 2021.
7. Prasad K. and Reddy V., "Cyber safety awareness and digital behavior among adolescents in India", 2023.