Use of Social Media Tools in Literacy Uplift of Youngsters

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Abstract

Media literacy is a growing concern now a days. Social media tools are found everywhere in educational institutions. It is important for students to have knowledge and use of different social media platforms for acquisition of literacy and academic excellence. The purpose of this study was to explore the effects of the use of social media tools in literacy uplift of youngsters. The major objective of the study was to analyze the role of social media tools (WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube) in improving literacy skills of youngsters. The population for this study was postgraduate students of AIOU Spring 2023. Sample comprised of randomly selected 100 students who were using social media in their studies. Research design was quantitative in which survey was used. Data collection was done online through a self-developed questionnaire. Results indicated that most of the respondents used phones for knowledge sharing, academic purposes, group discussions etc. Different social media tools WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook etc. help students to solve their study related problems. Students get assistance in their exams, different videos, online study groups on WhatsApp assist students to improve their literacy skills. Social media allows students to work together globally to solve problems affecting the whole world. It is recommended that educational institutions may focus on the creation of online groups for students to easily communicate and work together, especially using smartphones. Moreover, educational institutes may provide students guidance on how to use social media tools for educational and career advantages.

Keywords: *Social Media, Literacy, WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook*

Introduction

People all around the globe use social media (Rukavina, et al. 2021). Most of the interaction made today is through electronic means through websites for sharing messages, idea information and other material. There

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are some forums for social interaction through electronic namely Face book, Twitter, Wikipedia, WhatsApp, Team Viewer, LMS and LinkedIn are considered the prominent instances of social media. These types of interaction are nowadays known as electronic interaction of interaction through technology. This is a digitalized time filled with the ponders of innovation and an environment of quickly changing innovation where most of student's time is went through social gatherings and online intuitive (Johnson, 2013; & Pollara, 2011). Social media literacy refers to the acquaintance, adoption, and productive use of social media technology in any given setting (Murphy, 2022). Gastelum and Whattam (2013) found that social media includes various types like "blogs, chat platforms, social networking sites, video and photo sharing, and open-source mapping" etc. Junco (2014, p. 23) states that "technology has become an integral part of our lives and is constantly evolving. Social media is a way for people to create and share things with others. It lets groups and individuals work together and communicate with each other". Social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook are websites where people can find and connect with friends, family, and colleagues (Kirschner and Karin's, 2010).

According to Ardian et al. (2019), most of teenagers prefer to use Facebook, Twitter, Path, YouTube, Instagram, Line etc. Facebook has a massive 2.7 billion people who use it every month. Then, YouTube with 2.52 billion users followed by WhatsApp and Instagram securing almost 2 billion users (Annur, 2023). This is effectively used in educational institutions as well to promote literacy skills and improve academic success of students. Students use social media for both socializing and literacy enhancement activities. Because a lot of people like to use social websites and students are really into social media, a lot of people are interested in studying how well these online social networks work. Social media and online networking effect on how well students do in school. So, social media is an important platform where content is not only created but shared by millions of people on daily basis. Students and adolescents take benefit from these equally. So, there needs educating students to wisely use social media sites (Aisa & Ratnawati, 2022).

Since science and technology are advancing quickly, and college students are happy with how quickly they are adopting new technology. Students use social media for both socializing and literacy enhancement activities. Because a lot of people like to use social websites and students are really into social media, a lot of people are interested in studying how well these online social networks work. In the past, people have studied how social media and online networking affect how well students do in school. According to Legaree's (2015) using social media more could

make students feel stressed and have an impact on how well they do in school. However, there are security concerns which needs to be kept in mind while using social media tools for young children (Al-Turjman & Salama, 2021). Social media can have both good and bad impacts. Because of the many advantages provided by online discussion forums for students and teachers, they are now commonly used alongside traditional classrooms. Social media allows researchers to easily communicate and collaborate with people outside of academia and with each other. It also helps improve access to academic resources and bridges the gap between teachers and students. Students often use social networking sites to communicate with their teachers, instructors, and professors casually and formally about their academic issues and to interact with them. Paul, Baker, and Cochran (2012) said that schools and teachers are starting to use social media like LinkedIn and Facebook to communicate with students and share learning materials with them.

The instant utilization of social media has shaped the way we think about groups, friends, and people whom we don't know (Parewe etal., 2021). Most studies have shown that when students use social media for educational reasons, their grades are better. One study by Smith and Caruso (2010) found that social networking helped IT students do better in school. Another study by Junco, Heiberger and Loken (2011) found that using Twitter for academic discussions also had a positive impact on college students' grades. According to Lambic's study in 2016, students who used social media for school purposes did better in their studies. Using Facebook's website as a platform for teaching can significantly increase engagement and satisfaction of undergraduate students in a calculus course. They found that creating a separate Facebook group for discussing course content outside of class had a positive impact on student performance. Legaree (2015) checked how WhatsApp affected the performance of slow learners in India based on the exam results of medical students. They discovered that using WhatsApp helped improve the knowledge and performance of these slow learners. Even though social media is popular for personal use, only a small number of teachers and students use it for educational purposes. Researchers are looking into how people use Facebook and finding both good and bad things about it. Most students use social media for things that are not related to school. Social networking websites distract students and divert their attention from academic activities to non-academic and incorrect activities, such as pointless discussions. We can say that social media can negatively impact students' learning experiences and academic life. According to Fori's study in 2016, using social media does not impact students' academic

performance. The research by Reynol and Junco (2012) found that using Facebook and checking Facebook frequently had a negative impact on students' overall grades in terms of GPA. Additionally, spending time on Facebook is somewhat connected to spending less time studying. Additionally, the ability to use Facebook wisely and effectively affects students' overall grades, specifically their GPA. It has been observed that using Facebook in various ways negatively impacts their education. The amount of time students spend on social media can also affect their educational performance. Previous studies have shown that students who use social media a lot have worse academic performance. For example, Paul, Baker, and Cochran's study in 2012 found that students who spend more time on online social networking do worse in school. The study by Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) also discovered that spending too much time on social media can harm a student's grades. Moreover, Kirschner and Karpinski (2010) found that using Facebook had a negative effect on students' grades and the amount of time they spent studying each week.

However, recent studied have shown positive impact of social media tools on students' literacy skills acquisition and overall improvement of literacies. In a literature review conducted by Zhao et al. (2022) in which synthesis of different studies indicated that a wide range of social media tools are used in different contexts for diverse learning activities. Different studies Preis, Becirovic and Geyer (2023) and Porat, Blau, and Barak (2024) confirm that social media tools improve students' digital writing skills. in one more study, Mariappan et al. (2017) supported utility of Facebook in education. In one research by Mulya et al. (2021) indicated significant role of YouTube in education indicating that "YouTube media is proven to be able to improve technological literacy in elementary school students and can be used as a technology literacy media". Murphy (2024) that social media has positive impact on literacy and enhances students' confidence of writing in blogs and other mediums.

Social networks are becoming more and more popular for sharing information and communicating with others. It has changed the way news is collected and shared, showing a clear shift from print and broadcast media to the more popular and efficient social media platforms. Last year, social networking was very important for sharing information and communicating in Pakistan. It was an event that we will always remember. While these websites offer various ways to protect your privacy, many people join and participate because they enjoy sharing information with others. Privacy on social networking sites has a new meaning. When you join these sites, you have to provide some of your personal information. Some websites, such as Facebook, originally began as a way for college

students to communicate with each other. To create an account, students needed to have an email address ending in "edu". Now, anyone can use this website, which means more people might have two accounts: one for personal stuff and one for work or school.

When trying to understand why these websites are liked by many people, it's important to know that each social media site focuses on how people show themselves and their social standing. When someone joins a social networking site, they have to pick a picture to use as their personal profile picture. This picture represents them on the site. Some people use a new photo of themselves or a picture with their friends, while others pick a different image that they feel represents them or their beliefs. Regardless, this picture is important when considering a social networking site because it demonstrates how every person wants to appear to others.

When educating students for use of social media literacy, their guidance by teachers is also important. In this regard a community service was done by Herman et al. (2022). They considered guidance should be provided to teachers to teach to impart digital literacy skills in efficient and smooth way. According to Jain et al. (202) there are many issues related with use of social media tools which include abuse, spread of false information, data privacy issues, harassment issues for females in many countries etc. so, trustworthiness of information on different social media websites may be checked to give accurate and reliable information to students. In many cases it is seen that social media status is important on social networking sites for students because it affects how others see ones' profile. Most social networking sites will display the number of "friends" a person has, and how many people have recently messaged that person. As a result, many people on social media will look for others to connect with, even if they don't really want to be associated with certain individuals. Teenagers and young adults really want to have a lot of friends because they are afraid of what people will think if they don't have as many friends as others their age. Using a social networking site (SNS) can help one to become popular and keep popularity. In one study by Festl (2021) investigated that different aspects of adolescents' social media literacy "knowledge, ability and motivation" their family and peers impact their level of socially competent online behaviour.

Present study was done to find out and understand how social media helps in promoting education. The researcher chose this topic because many people nowadays use social media for their academic needs. The research found that social media has a huge effect on students when it comes to learning with interest and enjoyment. Almost every student uses a social media platform. In addition, the results show that participants

agreed that social media plays an important role in helping them with their literacy skills, academic tasks, and literacy skills' acquisition. Different social media tools WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook etc. helps students to solve their study related problems. Students get assistance in their exams, different videos, online study groups on WhatsApp assist students to improve their literacy skills. Moreover, they get chances of meeting with expert teachers, mentors and trainers online, discussion with peers, friends and class fellows in social groups. Social networking also allows them to enhance their overall literacy skills, difficult concepts and academic achievement. Overall, it's a healthy platform for students to interact with each other for academic excellence and progress.

Statement of the Problem
The world has shrunk into a global village due to the explosion of technology and social media tools. People are connected everywhere and anywhere virtually. Every industry has taken big advantage of social media tools including education. There are certain pros and cons associated with the use of social media tools. We may suspect its bad impact on students' moral aspect; hence we may not deny its utility on students' literacy skills, refinement in educational knowledge and exposure to variety of contents. Keeping in view this study aimed to explore the effects of social media tools in literacy uplift of youngsters.

Objectives of the study
1. To explore role of social media tools in literacy uplift of youngsters.
2. To investigate use of social media tools to enhance overall literacy environment.

Research Questions
- What is students' knowledge about social media and its use?
- To what extent WhatsApp is promoting interactive, basic and academic literacy among youngsters?
- To what extent Facebook is promoting interactive, basic and academic literacy among youngsters?
- To what extent You Tube is promoting interactive, basic and academic literacy among youngsters?
- What is the role of social media tools to improve basic literacy skills of students?

- How social media tools enhances interactive literacy skills (support in studies i.e. assignments, projects etc.)?

Research Methodology

This study used survey study and quantitative research design was adopted. Following is the description of the study design in phases:
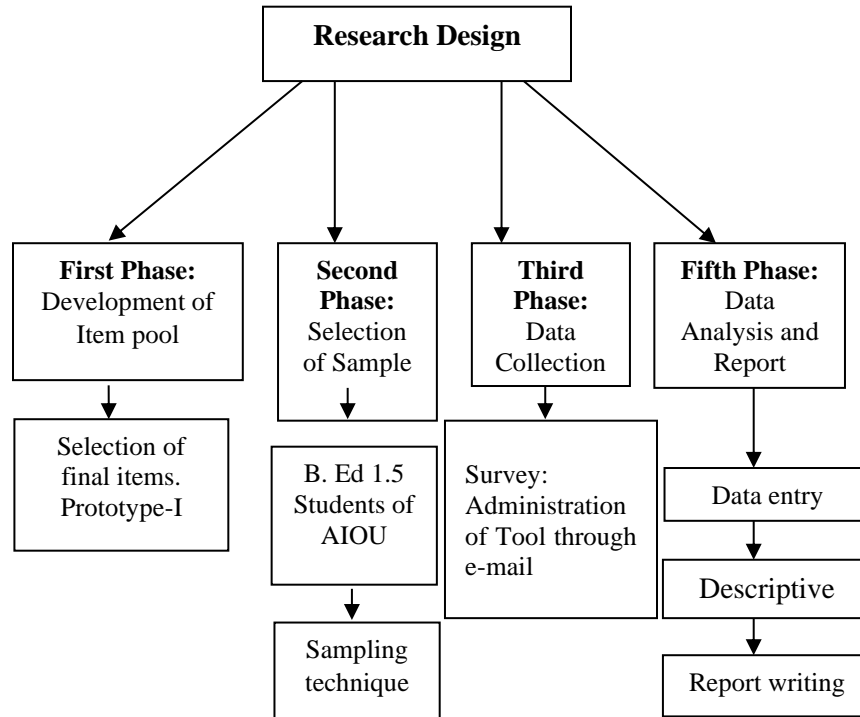
Population and Sample

Population comprised on postgraduate students (B. Ed 1.5) of Allama Iqbal Open University (spring 2022). Random sampling was used to select the sample (100 students), out of which 99 students responded and participated in this research.

Research Tool

In this study, the researcher developed a tool on social media. This scale was constructed after developing a large pool of items of 45. Total items were 20 in the final tool. There were 3 subscales of the tool WhatsApp, Facebook and You Tube. Language of the scale was English, and it had 3-point rating scale. This scale was based upon the objectives of the study and aligned with research questions.

Variables of Study

Facebook, WhatsApp and YouTube were main variables in social media tools, whereas literacy uplift was taken in terms of students' improvement in their studies by seeking their opinions through questionnaire.

Data Collection and Procedure of the Study

Data collection was done through google form. This technique is widely used because most of the respondents have access to the internet and easily give their opinion on a certain phenomenon being investigated. Following data collection procedure was used:

- The sample was selected, and research tools were developed.
- Students from B.Ed. 1.5 were identified for data collection.
- Students were sent the scale through WhatsApp and Google Docs.
- Filled scale was obtained from them.
- A thank you note was also conveyed to the participants of the study.

Data was analyzed by descriptive statistics mean and percentages etc.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1

Knowledge about social media and its use

	Average	Excellent	Good	Average
Knowledge of social media tools	15 %	27%	42%	14%

Table 1 indicates that respondents rated social media 'Excellent". In this regard, the majority of 27% respondents favor social media.

Table 2

Use of WhatsApp to promote interactive, basic and academic literacy

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree
WhatsApp groups' discussion improves interactive literacy	48 %	22%	22%	06%
Improvement in basic literacy	24 %	11%	15%	08%
Improvement in academic literacy	34 %	11%	34%	19%

Assistantance in preparation for exams	44 %	14%	35%	05%

Table 2 indicates that respondents preferred WhatsApp because it helps them to promote interactive, basic and academic literacy. In this regard, majority of 48% respondents favor WhatsApp because WhatsApp groups let them discuss with experts' teachers and follow students and enhance interactive literacy opportunities resulting in improved academic progress. This may help them to learn new things when they are in negotiation and interaction with others. Respondents preferred (24%) WhatsApp because they improve their basic literacy skills which contains reading, writing and arithmetic skills. This is because when they are interacting with peers and teachers, they learn new social media websites and links to visit and learn through these. In this regard, the majority of 24% respondents favor social media. Most of participants (34%) favor WhatsApp because it helps to learn my academic concepts. Overall, it is apparent from this table that WhatsApp is a powerful tool to enhance literacy skills of students.

Table 3
Use of Facebook to promote interactive and academic literacy

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree
Enhancement of interactive literacy opportunities to solve assignments	31 %	35%	17%	15%
Improvement in academic literacy	28 %	22%	27%	21%

Table 3 indicates that respondents preferred Facebook because it enhances interactive literacy opportunities. Majority of 31% respondents favor social media because interaction on Facebook provides students assistance to solve their assignments. There are Facebook communities and study groups where students can join for their study purposes. They also preferred (34%) Facebook because it enables them to learn academic literacy and difficult concepts. This is because there are experts available on Facebook communities and groups where lots of views on one concept may develop critical thinking and conceptual abilities among students. To conclude, it is apparent from table values that Facebook is popular social media tool for enhancement of their interactive and academic literacy activities among students.

Table 4
Use of Youtube to promote interactiveand basic literacy

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree
Provision of interactive literacy opportunities in preparation for exams	72 %	8%	12%	06%
Improvement in basic literacy skills	78 %	6%	9%	05%

Table 4 indicates that respondents prefer Youtube as there is provision of interactive literacy opportunities in preparation for exams. In this regard, the majority of 72% respondents agreed with it. The majority also opted for Youtube because it helps to learn academic literacy concepts. In this regard, most of 78% respondents preferred YouTube. This may be due to the potential benefit of YouTube videos on education. We can see thousands of YouTube educational channels which promote basic and interactive literacy opportunities. Regarding course or textbook, there are lecture videos on each component which provides supplementary opportunities to students.

Table 5
Social media use to enhance literacy environment (basic literacy, interactive literacy)

Items	to some extent	Yes	No
Enhancement in academic performance and literacy skills	19 %	72%	08%
Improvement in learning/acquisition of literacy	27 %	68%	04%
Imporvement in interapersonal literacy acquisition skills	27 %	62%	02%
Imporvement in interpersonal literacy acquisition skills	25 %	60%	14%
Provision of interactive literacy and assistance in assignments	22 %	66%	12%
Interactive literacy assists in solving academic queries	21 %	61%	17%
Enhancement of peer literacy environment	18 %	72%	09%
Alternate virtual literacy environemnt than traditional literacy	30 %	35%	34%

Acquisition/ provision of relaible literacy material	34 %	50%	15%

In this table respondents were asked about social media use to enhance literacy environment (basic literacy, interactive literacy). In the first statement, most of respondents (72%) indicated that social media is an empowering tool to enhance their academic performance and literacy skills. Respondents also indicated (68%) that educational content shared on social media networks are helpful in their learning process and acquisition of literacy skills. Most of the respondents (62%) indicated that they observe improvement in their learning ability through socail media tools through inteapersonl skills when they are reading contnet on whatsApp and other social media sites. They also agreed (60%) that social media play a vital role in increasing literacy skills through interpersonl communication probably on Whats App, Facebook, and other social media tools. Most of the respondents (66%) indicated that when they use social media tools these help them to solve assignments. Since, social media tool is useful in their learning, interactivre literacy and academics, majority of them (61%) personally prefer soial media for their academic tasks as it enhances interactive literacy environment which promotes discussion to solve study related queries. As a student, majority (72%) indicated that they would like to work in group activities through social media as it promotes peer literacy environment. On the next itme, respondents remained almost neutral (to some extent 34%, yes 35%, no 34%) towards ssocial media as an alternative virtual literacy environemnt than traditional literacy. Overall, they indicated that social media tools improve their literacy environment, literacy skills, enhance knowledge and boost academic achievement. So, they highly (66%) rely on educational and literacy material collected from social media networks.

Findings and Discussion

Nowadays with the use of social media tools we can get an appropriate solution for academic issues. In an academic sense we use social media tools to get quick and more accurate information for the solution of our problems. Findings of study indicated that different social media tools WhatsApp, Facebook and YouTube promote literacy environment as these assist students to boost their interactive literacy, basic literacy and academic literacy.

First finding was related worth of WhatsApp. In this regard, it was found (Table 2) that WhatsApp play crucial role in improvement of literacy skills by endorsing interactive literacy prospects, basic literacy platforms and academic literacy discussion opportunities. While

interacting with peers and teachers, there are many opportunities of sharing content, videos, calls and links to students. Now a days WhatsApp is gaining more enhanced features which encourage students to connect and learn more rapidly than earlier. So, researcher believes that content sharing on WhatsApp is the most positive factor in influencing literacy skills of youngsters. WhatsApp is a robust tool to boost literacy skills of learners. These findings are supported by literature review conducted by Zhao et al. (2022) in which synthesis of different studies indicated that a wide range of social media tools are used in different contexts for diverse learning activities.

Second finding was regarding Facebook, that it enhances interactive literacy opportunities (Table 3). Interaction on Facebook provides students assistance to solve their assignments. Different materials shared on Facebook help them to connect with each other and learn academic concepts well. Facebook is a powerful media which helps them to learn academics and improve literacy as there are Facebook communities and study groups where students can join for their study purposes. Availability of experts on Facebook communities and groups make it possible to gain views on one concept and develop critical thinking among students by improving academic literacy. Different studies Preis, Becirovic and Geyer (2023) and Porat, Blau, and Barak (2024) confirm that social media tools improve students' digital writing skills. in one more study, Mariappan et al. (2017) supported utility of Facebook in education.

Third finding was regarding positive role of Youtube to enhance interactive literacy opportunities in preparation for exams, academic literacy concepts, and provision of videos and channels to boost basic and interactive literacy opportunities. YouTube plays significant role in providing ample number of videos on a particular course or concept as supplement to students. Pertaining to the findings of this study, one research by Mulya et al. (2021) indicated significant role of YouTube in education indicating that "YouTube media is proven to be able to improve technological literacy in elementary school students and can be used as a technology literacy media".

Last finding was about social media use to enhance overall literacy environment including basic literacy, and interactive literacy (Table 5). Social media tools were found to be more fruitful and empowering to enhance literacy skills, as educational content shared on social media networks are helpful in their learning process and acquisition of literacy skills. Students' learning ability is improved as social media plays a vital role in increasing literacy skills, help them to solve assignments and academic tasks by promoting group activities. Social media play a

fundamental function in improving literacy skills through interpersonl and intrapersonal communication on Whats App, Facebook, and other social media tools. It enhances interactive literacy environment which promotes discussion to solve study related queries. These findings are supported by Murphy (2024) that social media has positive impact on literacy and enhances students' confidence of writing in blogs and other mediums.Overall, social media tools enrich literacy environment, literacy skills, improve information and advance intellectual abilities. However, in today's world, social media is a powerful tool for staying updated and learning about what's happening in the real world. Social media has made it easier for students to talk to each other and share school stuff. Additionally, many researches also found some drawbacks of social media. Using social media too much can distract students from their main goal. Therefore, it is important for parents, teachers, and schools to have checks and balances in place. The research found that if people have a good attitude and motivation when using social media, they can get good outcomes.

Conclusions and Recommendations
    Following conclusions are made:
WhatsApp enhances basic literacy and interactive literacy: WhatsApp appears to be most powerful social media tool with its recent enhanced interactive features to provide students a platform to come closer academically and interact with each other on academic issues and queries. It provides the best learning rich environment where students can share media, links, and connect in communities, groups and do conference calls in groups or individually. This helps in sharing innovative and engaging literacy content with each other.
Facebook in improves basic literacy and interactive literacy: Facebook is best medium which improves interactive literacy through virtual interaction on Facebook groups, and communities. Students relate to community of learning around them and seeking expert guidance in different Facebook groups which help them to connect with each other and learn academic concepts well. Facebook being a influential media facilitates learners in academics and improve basic literacy. Other skills i.e. critical thinking etc. are boosted by the presence of variety of views of members on a single concept during discussion in Facebook groups and communities.
YouTube increases basic literacy and interactive literacy: YouTube channels, TikTok videos, and Instagram stories etc. offer effective learning platforms to create and share innovative and engaging literacy content. YouTube channels and videos alleviates students' difficulty in grasping difficult concepts by allowing access to simplified complex

concepts in step-by-step videos hence making learning more enjoyable and accessible. One such example can be DIY projects which enhance students' literacy and creativity.

Improvement in overall literacy environment: Social media platforms enhance overall literacy environment including basic literacy, and interactive literacy through literacy discussions, online communities encourage youngsters to read more, write in groups hence improving writing skills. The feedback from peers and a global audience also can inspire youngsters to enhance literacy skills, refine writing techniques. A fundamental function of Whats App, Facebook, and other social media tools in improving overall literacy environmnet by simplifying complex concepts through interpersonl and intrapersonal communication and making learning more accessible. Overall, social media tools enrich literacy environment, literacy skills, improve information and advance intellectual abilities and enhance literacy in a broader context.

However, following are reccomendations of this paper:

- Social media allows students to work together globally to solve problems affecting the whole world. Every school may create online groups for students to easily communicate and work together, especially using smartphones.

- Educational institutes may provide students guidance on how to use social media tools for educational and career advantages.

- Educational institutions may create a professional and supportive social media environment that is like educational institutions.

- Departments may use social media more to showcase their educational and other activities. This will create a competitive environment that can benefit all departments and help them improve.

- Educational departments should make pages on social media to talk about important educational and after-school activities. Parents should also be told about what their kids are doing on social media.

- There needs to be enough privacy for the students, and users be maintained on social media groups.

- Trustworthy educational sites may be approved by the education authorities, and these may be circulated in schools and educational institutions so that students may not distract them from their studies.

- Parents need to set strict rules for social media tools for their children. They may look at the history of the websites they visit and the details of their online conversations. This will help prevent them from using offensive and inappropriate content that can negatively affect their thinking, feelings, and overall well-being.

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