Body dysmorphia and social media impact

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Abstract---Ours is a sophisticated period in current technology and science, with a plethora of digital communication tools. Social media is one of the most popular and widely utilised communication and entertainment technologies. Social media has produced a sense of attraction among persons in such a way that people or its users may develop a virtual connection and can discuss their life concerns as well. Few would argue or raise a finger at the fact that people are constantly spending time, which is expanding day by day, on these social network interactions connected via the internet. Within the last decade, these social networks have become extremely rich in terms of qualities and requirements, particularly in terms of visual depiction of oneself. People are changing their physical appearances and virtual representations to stay up with the new medium of technology and gain more followers. Psychological dysmorphia, anxiety, sadness, low self-esteem, and other mental illnesses are all caused by this behaviour. Psychological dysmorphia is a mental condition in which a

person spends a lot of time worrying about flaws in their bodily shape and appearance, particularly in their face. However, they believe that these imperfections go unnoticed by those around them. This type of mentality is frequently observed in the case of teens and young adults, both males and females, who are heavily linked on social media platforms. Our paper is about discussing the issues and finding the solution overall.

Keywords---body dysmorphic disorder, psychological, social media, technology, beauty standards, anxiety, mental flaws, visual representation.

Introduction

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Youtube, WhatsApp, WeChat, TikTok, Telegram, Viber, and other social communication apps have all received significant updates. A few years ago, the sole objective of using social media platforms was to entertain and recreate. These social applications were designed for sharing and expressing personal interests, publishing images of various events and festivities of different persons from other cultures, sharing tales and ideas, talking with others, and exchanging sentiments with those who were far away. However, since it has evolved into a supplement for the public, social media has now become an internal entity. The new improvements to social communication platforms have had a significant impact on users who are experiencing a separation between their body and mind. Users of social media platforms are more likely to be recognised as celebrities, to brand themselves, to promote their own businesses and ideologies, and to wish to go "viral."

Social media has become an inseparable part of the life of most individuals between the ages of 15 and 27, known as the youths, who are also too responsible for their anxieties. Instagram models, Twitter celebs, and Facebook celebrities are no longer a surprise, therefore the young people of this day evolved their minds in such a way that they might be ideal from every viewpoint. While scrolling through timelines and newsfeeds, we are exposed to posted photographs with rich editing, bright-coloured shots, and numerous app-edited unreal collections that do not accurately portray one's genuine look. Patients have been coming in with Snapchat filtered selfies to show what they want done to their bodies, according to Matthew Schulman, a plastic surgeon in New York. Constant exposure to filtered images may lead to an attempt to achieve unrealistic body structure and oval appearance, which results in psychological dysmorphia.

This type of behaviour is common among teenagers who are troubled by ideas of faults and imperfections in their bodies and faces. Dysmorphic behaviour in response to hormones, as well as external and internal distractions, can lead to depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and irritation. Furthermore, social media persuades individuals that an ideal person must be slender, handsome, muscular, stunning, attractive shaped, have a zero figure, clever, or updated, which may be detrimental to their mental health. Advertisements with catchy titles such as 11 Easy Ways to Get Your Best Brows Ever, 13 Secrets to Long, Thick, Shiny Hair,

17 Healthy Ways to Lose Weight Fast, and others can be found on social media platforms or in social applications. These advertising send an underlying message to people about how they should dress, how they should maintain their health and physical attractiveness, and so on. As a result, these oversee teaching us how to be flawless, even though we all have flaws and imperfections in our bodies. Aside from using a series of filters, quality, theme purpose, hashtags, and captions, users may also share photographs using a series of filters, quality, theme purpose, hashtags, and captions, and the use of credits has grown fashionable. Dysmorphic behaviour was produced because of this tendency, both psychologically and physically. Reasons for mental illnesses, literature studies, effects, surveys, and remedies are now covered, along with further processes.

Objectives

- To understand the Cause of double beauty standards and such related behaviours.
- To analyse the emotional and psychological impact caused because of social media.
- To distinguish the Factors responsible for Body Dysmorphia through social media
- To determine the expected results among male and female population.

Literature review

In contemporary times of hyper connected world, internet has revolutionized our interactions with people in general and individuals in. Social media and networking sites are at the forefront of this technological revolution that is rapidly modifying human behaviour and cognitive function of communication. There are approximately 4.55 billion active internet users as of 2022 . According to global statistics, India has a whooping 0.467 billion active users that constitute 47% of the population with an average Indian spending about 2.36 hours daily. Social media platforms like Instagram (76.50%), Facebook (74.70%), Twitter (49.90%) and snapchat (42.90%) are equally exploited by people of different age group but in particular by the adolescents and teenagers that constitutes as its bulk users responsible for vast network traffic , information, and data flow across the globe. The popular content partaken on social media comprises of filtered and photoshopped beauty images promoting ideal body figure, height , weight , skin tone , and facial features that sets precedent and become normative functions. "The problem is, when you alter a photo and the result is you-but-better-version staring back, you may start to get it in your head that that's what you should look like" (Willingham, 2018, para. 2).These images potentially shape young mind's perception on standards of beauty affecting their physical, social and mental psyche resulting in body dysmorphia.

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) and Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) classifies body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) along the obsessive- compulsive spectrum. People suffering from it exhibit repetitive and compulsive behaviours arising from acute self-perception leading to Constant mirror checking and seeking reassurance from people around that gradually

impacts their social and occupational functioning. Mental Health America article on body dysmorphia enunciates that "teenagers are particularly prone to developing BDD, and if "ideals" of appearance are presented to them through social media, this can trigger their development of the illness." Thus, we have witnessed an exponential boom in people seeking plastic surgeries to conform to their ideal Snapchat or Instagram filter. In an article to Indian express.com on BDD Dr Mayurnath Reddy, consultant psychiatrist, Yashoda Hospitals, Hyderabad enunciated that "In India, there are about one million cases per year," Dr Nilesh Satbhai, a leading senior consultant, Plastic, Hand and Reconstructive Surgery at Global Hospitals, Mumbai, reaffirmed the fact and said that "People's happiness and satisfaction has been hugely dependent on the 'likes', 'comments' and 'views' of others. Everybody is trying to follow the contemporary trends and make himself /herself better. This virtual world is naturally going to have a social and psychological impact on the individual. How you accept and deal with it determines the price you are paying for being 'social'."

Classified as HVSC(Highly-visual social media), Instagram and snapchat have been identified as two primary suspected applications that provide filters allowing users to not only manipulate saturation, brightness, and colour of their complexion but also facilitating the alteration of size of their lips , cheeks, eyes and change various aspects of their physical appearance via social media filters to enhance and mimic plastic surgeries such as facelifts and Botox injections. Once introduced as quirky and innovative features these filters have snowballed into mass hysteric trends to mitigate imperfection and thus resulting in "Snapchat Dysmorphia". "Self -esteem is a basic human need, and individuals usually strive to present themselves favourably" (Grossman, 2017, p. 27) thus when magazines , television advertisements and content (tv series , movies) over period set certain impossible standards of beauty in the society and psychologically nudges the audience to adopt them its results in low self- esteem and people often conform to extreme medical procedures and body changes to gain acceptance on social media creating a complex nexus that promotes and sustains body dysmorphia , psychological and emotional damage in the society. According to an article on combating 'Social Media Dysmorphia', nearly 18.1 million cosmetic procedures were performed in the U.S (2019). From minimal invasive procedures to complex surgeries like facelifts, eyelid surgeries and liposuction have seen exponential growth. This procedure could cost between anywhere between $2,000 to $4,000 per treatment while others could go up to colossal economic cost of $9000.

Thus, much research have been conducted on the topic and one such research was carried out by Janella Eshiet. She adopted a qualitative approach with 18 females only participants using snapchat and Instagram from university of California. The research methodology exhibited narrative unstructured interviews of 25-30 minutes via questionnaire pertaining to usage of beauty filters in different age group and their overview about beauty and body image with open ended questions. They were inquired as to what perception of beauty do college students using Snapchat and Instagram hold ? and what these filtered photos do to their self-esteem and body image acumen ? The thematic data analysis of her study from received responses substantiated that social media puts unrealistic pressure upon individual conforming to ascribed body standards. It elucidated the respondent's usage pattern(filters), duration and apprehensions framing

mental and emotional psyche. However, the research failed to provide any statistical data, insights into economical cost and lacked diverse substantial quantitativeinformation.

Similarly, another research conducted by Himanshu , Avneet Kaur, Ashishjot Kaur & Gaurav Singla (2020) on "Rising Dysmorphia Among Adolescents" was conducted with 186 active participants, average age being 16.The study was carried via semi structured interviews and questionnaires pertaining to appearance of body parts and features. The respondents were inquired about perceiving their body features as ugly or unattractive and how it impacted their social manoeuvrings like parties social and family gatherings. The qualitative and quantitative study substantiated the observations of women being more afflicted by fat , facial hair , complexion , height body features on social media in comparison to their male counterpart concerned with height , acne , hair thinning and weight. In an article by Forbes Dr. Helen Egger, child psychiatrist and co-founder of forthcoming mental health company Little Otter voiced that social media platform have a moral and ethical obligation to not promote filters that creates disharmony and confusion in context of beauty standards among youth. Thus, with adequate substantial evidence , social media's instrumental role in creating body image psychosis leading to disorders like anorexia and bulimia cannot be ignored. Hence the study propagates positive self-body image campaigns and awareness like "Selfie Talk Campaign" and "No Digital Distortion" as viable solutions. They also bat for " right vocabulary" , "social media regulations" and "reduced exposure" to combat this social menace.

The discipline of body dysmorphia and social media impact are very nascent and as such extremely limited studies and research have been conducted thus providing opportunity for young researchers to explore and contribute. The lack of extensive qualitative and quantitative research upon the discipline makes this noble undertaking paramount. This research exploresbody dysmorphia its causes , concerns, and solutions with initiative-taking participations from adolescents across different age groups and discipline within safe and secure premises of Lovely professional university . The varied parameters incorporated pertains to bodily features (skin tone , hair , facial features etc) , issues of bullying , psychological, social, economic and body dysmorphia. . The methodology deploys vibrant questionnaire with open and close ended questions to collect relevant qualitative and quantitative data incorporating appropriate and diverse responses to provide a holistic understanding on the issue. The projectwas carried during the covid 19 pandemic and thus provides an alternative and new perspectiveupon the issues since months of lockdown contributed to systematic rise in social media users, sedentary lifestyle , anxiety , depression , low self-esteem, and poor self-self-image . It extensively caters to the issue among the teenager or adolescents studying in university actively using social media. This noble undertaking would open new horizons in the topic by filling gaps and will contribute extensively and efficiently to existing knowledge.

Research Methodology

Participants

The 108 Indian students (M age 20.9; 43 females, 65 males) were recruited using social media and email promotions. Individuals who might be interested in participating in the study received a personal email with a broad description of the test method and other necessary information. All participants were over the age of 15 and provided informed permission to the procedure and the use of personal data. All information was gathered and processed anonymously.

Measures
Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) questionnaire

Evaluate the extent to which participants perceived that they had or are having BDD, I used BDD questionnaire. it is a "self-test" that a person fills out for himself or herself. BDD can only be diagnosed by a certified mental health professional, however this test can help us decide if we need help.

Procedure

Participants were informed of the study's goals and scope before commencing the exam. They received an email with a link to the questionnaire. The participants were given thorough instructions on the screen before beginning to fill out the questionnaire. They initially answered basic demographic questions about their age, gender, and so on, before moving on to the questions about whether they had any symptoms of BDD. They were then asked a series of questions about their self-perception and whether they use social media filters. They were then questioned about their experience, including if they had been harassed or embarrassed by others or by a social media account. They were instructed to answer each question honestly to retain secrecy. The scoring was conducted in accordance with the scoring guidelines.

Data analysis

The BDD and social media impact questionnaire is divided into three segments:

- Social Media Insights - Consist of 6 questions with multiple choice questions. Questions were designed to understand the insights of the participants' social media. To understand the impact of social media it is necessary to find out how prominently the user uses it. The questions also analyse the subject's interaction with the audience and what they consider of themselves while posting their pictures online.
- Psychological Behaviour – Second segment also consists of 6 questions each with 4-point Likert scale. All the questions focus on how the subject considers himself/herself regarding showing themselves in social media. The questions conceptualise the fake beauty standards and how the subject is comparing themselves and feeling psychologically down and miserable leading to serious mental health conditions
- Detecting BDD- The segment comprises 5 questions, with 4-point Likert

scale. The questions totally focus to detect the level of developing Body Dysmorphic Disorder. The scale does not diagnose the condition, instead confirms the initiation due to social media impact. All the three-segments have 17 questions which the subject will fill. The questionnaire acknowledges the objectives resulting to find the desired data.

Scoring and Norms

First Segment, first two questions will be marked one for yes and zero for No. Third and Fourth question will be marked according to the 4-point Likert Scale and the 5th question will be marked within 3point Likert scale and the sixth question will be marked similarly to the 4th and 5th question. Second and Third segments will follow the 4-point Likert Scale system. The maximum score will be 58 and the minimum will be 0. In accordance with the categories the marks are divided into three with following interpretations.

Score Range	Level	Interpretation
40-58	High	Social media highly responsible for BDD
20-39	Average	Social media initiates BDD
0-19	Low	Social Media may be responsible for BDD

Findings

In total 108 students participated in filling out the questionnaire. A brief description was given to the subject about the research and their role. Once the participants choose yes after reading the description they proceed to the rest of the questions. 99.1% of the population choose to participate among which 60.2% is male and 39.8% female. 69.4% of the participants were around the ages 20-25 and 15.7% were aged 15-20yr old and the rest 14.8% population aged between 20-25. First part of the questionnaire inspecting social media impact 67.3% of the population said they are worried about their looks and 47.7% choose yes that they worry and overthink about the same. To understand the beauty standards subjects were asked about using filters to their pictures 31.8% choose the option that they use filters to enhance their beauty and more 89% population also confirms that they have beauty enhancing apps and software that they use before uploading a picture to meet the beauty standards. 73% of the population said that their last uploaded 5 pictures contained filters or beauty enhancing techniques. Majority of the population agreed that people in social media appreciate, and value filtered flawless pictures more than the real one. Thus, it is getting part of their ways to use filters to meet the standards. Next part of the questionnaire analysing psychological behaviour, 30% of the participants agreed that they were the victim of bullying which occurred specifically because of their looks. 21.5% choose neutral instead of selecting disagreeing. Majority of the subject's agreed that they never get appreciated enough while uploading their no filter pictures. 38% of subjects said that they feel anxious and act obsessive after uploading their picture. Almost 80% agreed that social media is harmful with respect to beauty standards. 40% said that they click an album of pictures and upload one by applying enhancing filters otherwise they feel anxious.

Last part summarised by detecting BDD. Majority answered that they deliberately check their features multiple times in a day and overthink about them. 50% agreed that they feel they are slightly or more unattractive or there are some features that are not up to the mark. 59% of participants clicked that it is distressing when they compare their features with social media influencers, and they attempted to hide the perceived flaw with makeup and outfits. 98% subjects said that they believe that others particularly noticed the perceived flaw in their appearances and make judgements about the same. The below given link will redirect to the scoring of the acquired results from 108 participants. It is arranged from highest to the lowest according to the severity of the levels of BDD because of social media. Participants names are kept confidential, and the marking is done accordingly keeping just the name anonymous and real data. 'Response sheet".

Result

A total of 108 students participated in filling out the survey. As per the analysis in Table1, the participants fall into three categories. 6 out of 108 subjects have scored high on the BDD survey. This implies that they have an elevated risk of getting affected by social media activities. The other users can easily manipulate them. 68 out of 108 participants fall in the medium range. This implies that more than half of them are at the threat of dropping in the high range category. The remaining 34 respondents have manageable social media life and exceptionally low chances of contracting BDD. Yet it cannot be said for sure if they can attain this score throughout their life. Also, this questionnaire does not conclude if the participants are suffering with BDD as it is not a diagnostic test. It defines the probability of the same.

Table 3
Percentage and category of the participants.

CATEGORY	Percentage w.r.t participants
High	5.6%
Average	63%
Low	31.4%

The research showed that the perception of beauty and the use of beauty filters, among male and female university students mentioned an alarming condition of Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD). It is shown that maximum subjects are more drawn towards the beauty aspect of their outlook when it comes to presenting themselves in social media platforms. The research was equally aimed at the male and female population. It also resulted to find that there are a few students who consider themselves weak and have fallen to critical criteria of DSM. Hence the results match the expected outcome.

Discussion

Certain psychological disorders cannot be diagnosed easily such as the case of Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD). BDD is caused due to a deformed/distorted body image, the victim suffers certain issues like social anxiety, isolation, depression, and in extreme cases suicidal thoughts. It is harsh on an individual

who is suffering from the same and is not aware that such a term exists and then classifying them into the same and introducing it in their life might bring mental imbalance. Although it seems to be a hectic task, a mentor must counsel young adults. The schools and colleges must not restrict the knowledge to the books. The need of the hour is to make them aware of how biology works. Our bodies grow with time; getting fat, acne, height, and certain factors do not always work according to our lifestyle. The psychologists or the school counsellors must be aware if the students are facing any psychological disorders such as BDD. As this disorder mostly originates during the period when they are ready to make a shift from school to college and getting acceptance from others is of prime importance to them.

The present study comprises 108 Indian students of the age group 15-30. The percentage of male participation is comparatively higher than that of females and no participation of other gender. The design of the questionnaire was kept simple, so it is vivid to everyone filling it. It is created in a manner that gives a clear picture to an individual that this form is about the BDD and what can be the contributing factors. From the study, it is revealed that beauty filters on social media are used to keep up with the ongoing trends, enhance beauty, and avoid any hate comments. All genders are equally concerned about how they are seen by others and are hesitant of being seen without filters. One encounters an event where they get into a quarrel with their friends on uploading, they are not so pretty picture at least once in a lifetime.

The population has a mindset that the filtered pictures get more appreciation than the one is taken from a normal camera. It is very astonishing to notice how these filters work. Imagine there might come a time when an eye lens will be introduced that will show the world how we perceive it in our head. Even if one does not fit the beauty standards, this lens will change others' perspectives on beauty. If carefully noted, one might ponder why work on something so useless when there are bigger issues to work on. The point that needs to be focused on here is that these issues originated in history and are linked to several events that changed with time but are passed onto the next generations with different names and complex outcomes. Bullying is an extremely popular never-ending phenomenon.

Several individuals post pictures on social media and check the app deliberately for the number of likes and comments. It is incredibly famous among youth to message the people in their contact to ask for likes and share their content with others. Presently, the rapid growth of BDD patients indicates that it is pivotal to bring about change and raise concern and bring interventions in this field to lower the amount of influence social media has on young adults. Thus, our research predicts that Body Dysmorphic Disorder is getting an alarming situation among adults and social media is playing a vital role. They are bending towards the superficial world were looking pretty puts them in heaven where nothing can go wrong. Assisting youth in understanding the artificiality and crassness of media body image representation, to live is paramount. Efforts must be put to influence adults in the fields that might interest them and distract them from focusing on superficial beauty standards.

To get a lucid picture of the outcomes, we could have added questions related to eating disorders, starvation, and fasting. Also, we could gather data on other genders since they always struggle with body image, self-acceptance and wish to change how their certain parts look. This factor broadens the research to an extent. This research lacks questions that are male focused, this research could have worked on notions like males wish not to look skinny and prefer a toned muscular body and tall height.

Conclusion

Social media has developed as a common middleman between individuals building a virtual connection in the age of the internet, revolutionising contemporary day social interactions. However, as with all modern technology, the tremors of its consequences have just recently surfaced in the form of psychological dysmorphia, anxiety, sadness, and low self-esteem. Individuals: representations on these platforms have grown increasingly shallow, contrasting sharply with reality, and frequently deceiving others. Beauty filters, which were first presented as social experiments to create a unique and humorous experience, have unfortunately snowballed into a psychological epidemic that affects everyone in modern society. The altered, manipulated, and precisely tuned photos have elevated beauty standards to an unattainable level, making it physically impossible for anyone to achieve such perfection. People are enticed by the beautiful and celebrity lifestyle shown in these photos, which makes them crave materialism and affects their social and emotional psyche. The problem is exacerbated by social media influencers who mislead people with their unscientific dietary regimens and half- baked information in the form of trends, which frequently result in catastrophic effects ranging from physical injury to medical illnesses such as anorexia. The repeated likes tags, and hearts not only capture people' minds, but also turn them into slaves for validation and turn them into a source of revenue by advertising and marketing required products to them with tips and idiotic portrayals of themselves in short and quirky videos that make people cringe.

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