

# Social Media's Impact on Teen Age Girls' Self - Esteem and Body Image

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**Abstract:** *This paper investigates whether social media affects the body image and self - esteem of teenage girls. Now a day's social media is the major source to share information among individuals. This paper provides the effects of social media on the body image and self - esteem of teenage girls. This study targets teenage girls because physical attractiveness is especially important to them and a thin and beautiful idealized image in social media plays a significant role in influencing their self - confidence.*

**Keywords:** Social media; Social networking; Teen age; Self - esteem; Body image

## 1. Introduction

Mass media has long been a powerful tool in influencing the public and their views on societal norms. In recent years, its influence has been particularly damaging to teenage girls in India, with a focus on their self - esteem and body image. This essay will discuss the history of mass media in India, the issues caused by its influence, and potential solutions to address the problem.

The history of mass media in India dates to the late 19th century, with the advent of newspapers and magazines. Since then, radio, television, the Internet and social media have become increasingly prevalent and have had a significant impact on the lives of Indian people. Mass media has been used to promote a range of products, services, and ideas and has helped to shape opinions and beliefs about topics such as fashion, beauty, health, and lifestyle. However, it has also been used to propagate unrealistic beauty standards and to create an idealized image of what it means to be a successful woman.

The impact of mass media on Indian teenage girls has been particularly damaging. Studies have shown that exposure to specific images and messages in the media can lead to a decrease in self - esteem and body image. This is because many of these images promote an ideal of beauty that is often impossible to achieve. For example, emphasizing thinness and conforming to specific body types can lead to a sense of inadequacy and a lack of self - confidence in teenage girls. In addition, focusing on physical appearance can lead to an unhealthy preoccupation with weight and dieting.

The effects of mass media on teenage girls in India are not limited to psychological issues. Studies have also found that exposure to specific images can increase eating disorders like anorexia and bulimia. This is particularly concerning as eating disorders can have severe physical and mental health consequences. Furthermore, there is evidence that mass media can contribute to the sexualization of young girls and objectifying their bodies. This, in turn, can lead to increased incidents of sexual harassment and abuse.

A combination of approaches is needed to address the issue

of the negative impact of mass media on teenage girls in India. Firstly, greater awareness needs to be raised amongst parents and educators of the potential dangers of exposure to specific images and messages. This could include educating young people about the types of media they should avoid and encouraging them to critically assess what they are exposed to.

In addition, the media industry needs to be held accountable for its content. This could be done by introducing regulations that ensure the media is not promoting unrealistic or unhealthy beauty standards. Furthermore, media producers should be encouraged to create images that reflect a diversity of body types and skin tones and to portray women positively and more empowering.

Finally, programs and initiatives should be introduced to help boost the self - esteem and body image of teenage girls in India. These could include educational or support groups or campaigns that promote body positivity and celebrate diversity.

Overall, mass media has had a detrimental effect on the self - esteem and body image of teenage girls in India. However, by increasing awareness of the issue, holding the media industry accountable, and introducing initiatives to promote body positivity, it is possible to mitigate the negative impact of mass media and help teenage girls feel more confident and comfortable in their skin.

## 2. Literature Review

In their study, Martin and Gentry [1] discovered that attractive commercial models affect female pre - teenagers and adolescents. Their research on girls in the fourth, sixth, and eighth grades revealed that social comparison significantly influenced girls' body image concerning media exposure. However, the social comparison hypothesis was not consistent across all grade levels; consequently, additional elements affect a girl's self - esteem on their exposure to beautiful models in advertising.

Stice et al. [2] followed 219 adolescent girls for some time, during which they either had a 15 - month subscription to a fashion magazine or did not. This was done to examine the

long - term impacts on women due to exposure to slim models on acute body dissatisfaction and negative affect. Despite the substantial statistical power and evidence that the experimental manipulation increased exposure to the fashion magazine, no main effects of long - term exposure to thin images were found on thin - ideal internalization, body dissatisfaction, dieting, bulimic symptoms, or negative effect. However, there was evidence that vulnerable teenagers, defined by initial increases in perceived pressure to be thin and body dissatisfaction, as well as deficits in social support, were negatively impacted by exposure to these images. Results indicate that vulnerable youth are negatively affected by exposure to thin - ideal images.

In their research, Bell et al. [3] examined the impact of thin models in music videos on the body dissatisfaction of 16–19 - year - old adolescent girls (n = 87). Participants initially completed positive and negative affect, self - esteem, and body image assessments. They then either listened to three songs (from the videos), saw three music videos, or learnt a list of words under the premise of a memory experiment. Following that, affect and body image were evaluated. Girls who were exposed to the music videos reported significantly higher scores on an adaption of the Body Image States Scale after the experience, indicating more body dissatisfaction compared to the music listening and word learning conditions. This study revealed that self - esteem did not substantially moderate this connection.

Levine and Murnen [4] evaluated the data on mass media as a risk factor for poor body image and disordered eating in females. By employing seven criteria that extend those of Kraemer et al. (1997) and Stice (2002), the objective is to clarify the impact of mass media. Although the effects of the media do meet the bulk of the conditions, their study suggests that exposure to the media is better understood as a potentially causative risk factor rather than a fixed one.

Hayes and Tantleff - Dunn [5] examined how young girls' body image is affected by brief exposure to media about looks. For this, one hundred twenty - one 3 to 6 - year - old girls took part. Results showed that exposure did not change how unhappy people were with their bodies or how much they played with their appearance. This is the first real - world study to back up the idea that young girls' exposure to the media doesn't affect how they feel about their bodies. Instead of comparing themselves to the characters, as older people do, young children may take on the traits of attractive characters with whom they can identify. Self - report data showed that almost all girls liked how they looked, but nearly one - third of them would change something about their looks, and almost half worried about being fat. Exposure to media about appearance did not make worries worse.

Meier and Gray [6] investigated the association between adolescent girls' Facebook (F. B.) activities and body image. Their study found that teenage girls spending more time on the Internet were more likely to have body image issues, and this correlation held especially true for those who used Facebook. Their study aimed to reproduce and expand on these findings by identifying the individual F. B. characteristics that correspond with body image disorder in

adolescent girls. To investigate this, they administered a questionnaire to 103 middle and high school girls. This questionnaire asked about their total Facebook usage, their use of specific Facebook features, how they view themselves, their weight dissatisfaction, their desire to be thin, their absorption of the thin ideal, and how they compare to others. They determined the individuals' attractiveness exposure score by comparing the time spent using Facebook photo applications to the total time spent using Facebook. They discussed the implications for programmes that prevent eating disorders and the best methods for researching social networking sites.

Franchina and Coco [7] reviewed the extant body of research dealing with the influence of social media on body image concerns, especially among adolescents. According to them, via the Internet, adolescents get access to different kinds of Internet - based media, such as social media (including social networking sites). Their results documented the importance of idealized social media models, especially thin - ideal models for girls and muscular - ideal models for boys, in shaping the body perceptions of adolescents. However, according to them, the effects of pressure from social media on body image concerns in men need to be further investigated in clinical and community samples.

Yuan [8] examined the reason behind teenagers' anxiety and depression. For this research, he conducted a questionnaire survey to collect data. He found that social media has negatively affected teenagers' mental health because spending time on social media has reduced their time to engage in face - to - face interactions.

Choukas - Bradley et al. [9] presented a developmental - sociocultural paradigm for understanding the impact of social media (S. M.) on the issues of disordered eating, body image, and depressive symptoms experienced by adolescent girls. Researchers proposed in this work that the characteristics of social media, such as quantifiable feedback and idealized images of peers, intersect with adolescent developmental factors, such as the importance of peer relationships and sociocultural gender socialization processes, like the excessive attention given to women's and girls' physical appearance. This combination creates the "perfect storm" for increasing girls' body image concerns. They said that, in the end, worries about body image might be a key reason why adolescent girls' S. M. use is linked to their mental health. In the process of proposing this framework, they offered empirical evidence. It showed how S. M. might amplify adolescent girls' body image concerns by increasing their attention to 1. Their physical appearance, such as through appearance - related S. M. consciousness, exposure to idealized self - images, and encouraging over - vain thinking. 2. Other people's physical appearance, e. g., exposure to idealized images of peers, celebrities, and S. M. influencers, and quantifiable approval indicators. Their conceptual framework identifies fresh directions for future studies that acknowledge the central role of body image in adolescent girls' usage of S. M. and mental health.

Jolly [10] investigated the correlation between social media usage and social anxiety levels. The researcher's hypothesis

suggests no connection between using social media and experiencing social anxiety. The researcher examined this relationship using the Kutcher Generalized Social Anxiety Disorder Scale for Adolescents (K - GSADS - A) and the Social Networking Time Use Scale (SONTUS). The sample comprised sixty adolescents, with thirty boys and thirty females. Through descriptive analysis, it was revealed that individuals had above - average levels of social anxiety, as indicated by a mean score of 56.75 on the K - GSADS - A, and that individuals had high levels of social media usage, as shown by a mean score of 18.73 on the SONTUS. After statistical analysis with SPSS - 23, the correlation coefficient is - 0.08. The investigation results showed no strong connection between teens' social media use and their social anxiety level.

Dhingra and Parashar [11] conducted a pilot study on adolescents aged 12 to 18 to determine the impact of social networking sites on their minds. The purpose of their research was to assess the effects of social media on social and emotional learning. Their pilot study examined social networking sites' influence, utilization, and outcomes. From the survey, it appears that those between the ages of 16 - 18 use social media more frequently than those between the ages of 12 - 14 and 14 - 16. Their findings conclude that almost everyone is engaged in social media. They found that adolescents are very active on Instagram, which is by far the most popular social networking site. They have an account there. Social media's primary purpose is maintaining relationships with friends and family members. All participants believed that comments on social media could alter one's self - image and that their mood is affected by the number of likes, followers, friends, and views on a particular post. They claim that their findings support the increasing evidence that social media improves interpersonal relationships, offers emotional support during difficult times, promotes deserving causes, identifies sources of priceless knowledge and learning, and can aid in making career decisions and gaining perspective. They claim that there is a fine line between appropriate use and improper use of the medium. According to them, if we learn how to find our way through all the nooks and crannies, children can use social media to their advantage. The pilot study has helped us figure out how social media allows people to express themselves and be creative. It has helped them see things from different angles, has different opinions, and talk about them.

Kay et al. [12] investigated the connection between social media addiction and loneliness, self - esteem, and suicidality. Using convenience sampling, an online survey was used to sample university students (N = 198). The Yatt Suicide Attitude Scale (YSAS), Social Media Addiction Scale (SMAS), Rosenberg Self - esteem Scale (RSE), and University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Loneliness Scale - 3 were all used. The regression model accounted for 12.3% of the variance in social media addiction in the multiple linear regression study. Only self - esteem was found to be a reliable predictor of social media addiction. Finally, suicidality and loneliness were not significantly related to social media addiction. According to them, diagnosis and intervention of self - esteem difficulties among university students should be considered in treating

social media addiction.

### 3. Methodology

#### Procedure:

Step 1: Collect the details of 350 teenage girls from the various Educational Institutes/Universities in India.

Step 2: A questionnaire packet was developed and distributed to all teenage girls through online mode (Email, WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.).

Step 3: Out of 350 teenage girls, only 332 given the response and the researcher collected all the responses for data analysis.

### 4. Result and Discussions

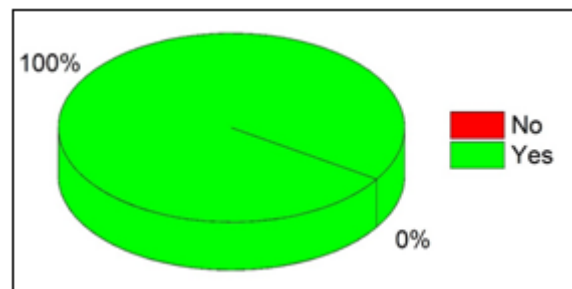


Figure 1: Social media usage by teenage girls

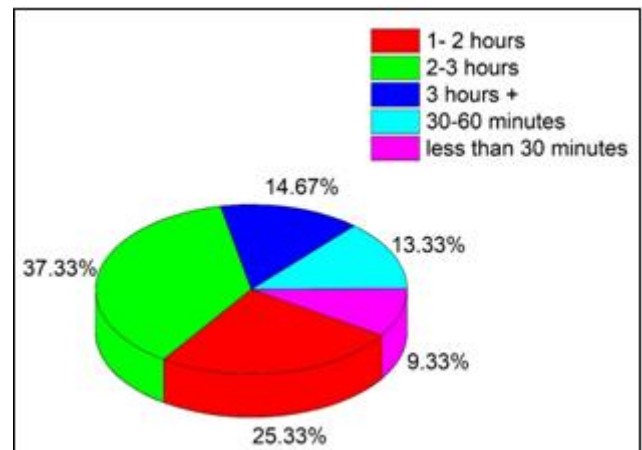


Figure 2: How much time teenage girls spend on social media

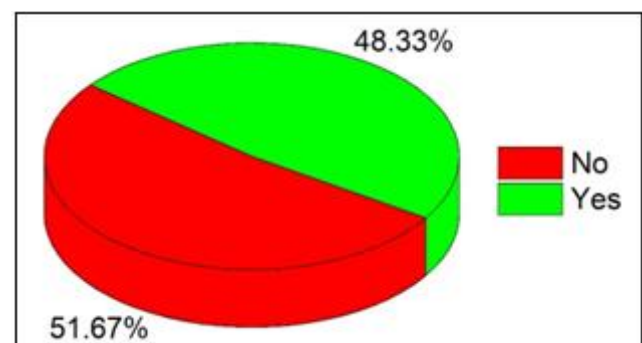


Figure 3: Fitness and health professionals followed by teenage girls using social media

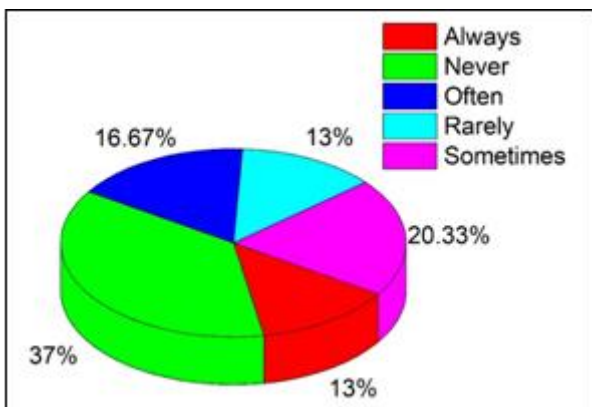


Figure 4: Body image comparison by teenage girls on social media

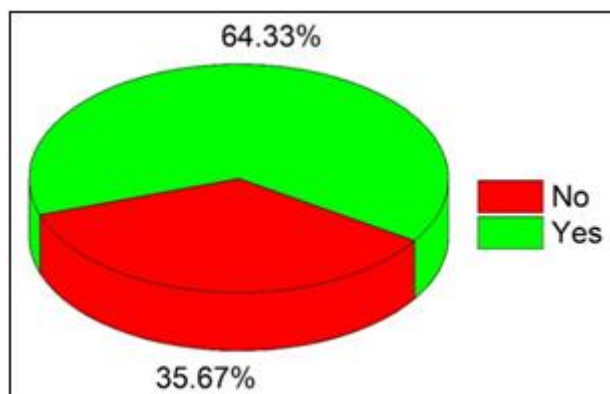


Figure 8: Reflection of teenage girls' self - esteem on their body image

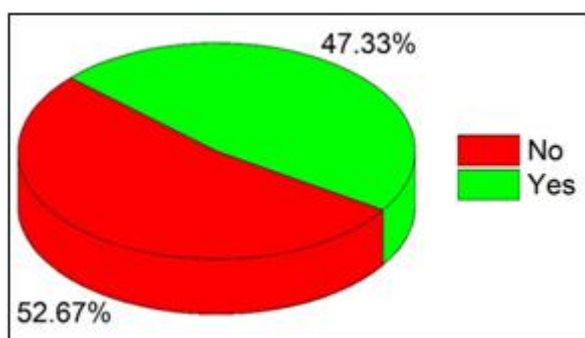


Figure 5: Influence of social media likes and comments on teenage girls

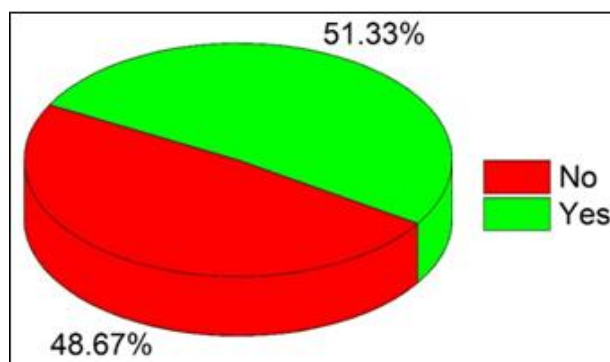


Figure 9: The influence of others' opinions on teenage girls' body image and self - esteem via social media

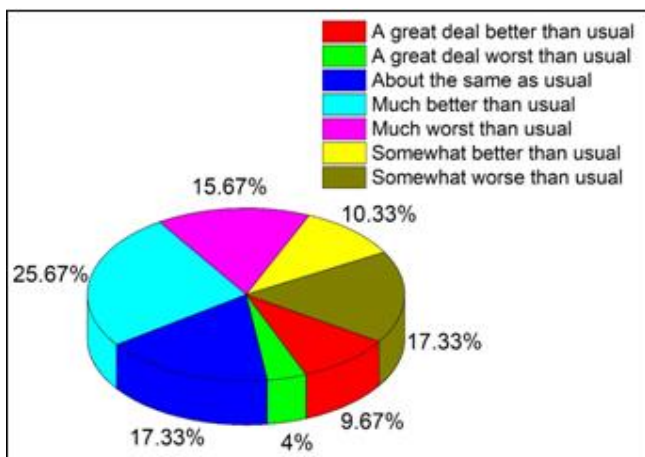


Figure 6: Impact of social media on the self - esteem of teenage girls

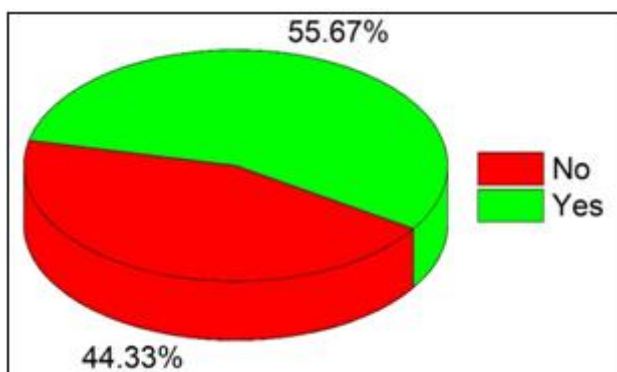


Figure 7: Social media negatively influences the body shape and image of teenage girls

In this paper the model is evaluated by collecting data using different software tools such as Encyclopedia, Grammarly, Quetext, Suma, Canva, Checkli, Forgett, Google Forms and Zoho Survey, then data is cleaned, transformed for data analysis to predict the behaviour of the model. We have used Google Forms in this software framework.

The exposure to social media of teenage girls is evaluated by using a questionnaire packet, which is useful to develop the relationship between social media, body image and self - esteem. That means the impact of social media on body image and self - esteem and also the impact of self - esteem on body image. Figures 1, 2 and 3 clearly show the exposure to social media. Figure 1 indicates that 100% of teenage girls are using social networking sites. From figure 2 and 3 it can be concluded that among all social networking sites WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn create a major impact on teenage girls. So, from the above results, it can be concluded that there is great exposure to social networking sites among teenage girls.

Figure 4, 5 and 6 shows the relation between social media and body image among teenage girls. These data clearly show that social media's effect influence teenage girls, this effect may be self - esteem or body image.

From the above results figure 7, 8 and 9 associated with the self - esteem of teenage girls on social media. Hence, from all the results we can conclude that the social media highly influence the body image and self Esteem of teenage girls.

## 5. Conclusion and Future Scope

In this paper, we have developed a methodology to analyse the effect of social media on body image and self-esteem of teenage girls. The results obtained by this method show the effect of social media on the body image and self-esteem of teenage girls. Furthermore, it is noticed that a biased data set may lead to wrong interpretation and subsequent error in judgment of such scenario. Most importantly, in this digital era, automated decision making on certain specific areas might come as a big relief for the Governments and nongovernmental agencies to concentrate more on the most essential and critical areas connected with social media. It is obvious that, in any possible future outbreaks AI will play a more crucial role in the analyzing the effect of social media and control of negative effect as more and more data is digitized every day.

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