

Mitigation of The Evil Influence of Internet Use On Teenagers in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

This is the information era. Whole the world is considered as a single village alias the concept of the global village has been accepted. Because each and every country is connected via Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

Specially, it is the Internet which is a connection of millions and millions of computers or servers throughout the world. It is said that more than 100 countries are connected into exchanges of data, information, news, knowledge, opinions and many more over the Internet. So, the Internet plays a main roll on the concept of globalization. Hence, the use of Internet is experienced by everyone everywhere and every time.

The Internet has divided the society into two portions called “Digital Natives and Digital Immigrants”. With the rapid development of ICT, there is a rapid trend of use of internet among the Digital natives alias the young generation in Sri Lanka, especially among teenagers.

Digital Natives’ this new trend of Internet use has brought out another bad trend of evil. So, this evil influence of internet use on teenagers was surveyed.

The survey has proven that the evil influence of Internet use has affected the teenagers’ physical and mental health which causes to raise many social and economic issues.

After the study of the research data, the main issues as well as the causes for the evil influence of internet use, for the Mitigation of the evil influence of Internet use on teenagers, suggested recommendations are as follows:

To enhance the parents’ observation on the teenagers’ internet related activities.

To improve the awareness on issues arise via the Internet use, among the teachers, parents, and the teenagers.

To enhance of the parents’ and teachers’ guidance to the teenagers on their internet related activities.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Internet is something that affects the life of everyone. Moreover, the life is not easy without the internet today. Specially, the modern life of the young generation depends on the internet. The modern young generation or Digital Natives is embracing the internet thoroughly. The internet has become as the most required equipment of the young generation today.

Education is the main purpose of the adolescents. Moreover, the internet has become as a main source of knowledge. There are all the learning materials on the internet. So, many learning things can be found without any difficulty by a student in anytime anywhere if a student is equipped with the internet.

So, many of young students use the internet, as it is very useful for the success of their education life. No one can reject it. So, all the students have to use the internet for their educational activities.

One more reason to use the Internet by teenagers is leisure. The internet is a paradise for amusement. Some youngsters do the internet surfing as a hobby. Some teenagers use the internet as a leisure time activity. Some girls and boys enjoy the internet in watching movies. All type of movies can be enjoyed freely or by paid. There are different types of websites for movies which can be enjoyed freely. There are many torrent sites also for easy film downloading.

The music is also another one of the entertainment among teenagers. All types of music and musicians of all over the world and their creations can be entertained easily by any adolescent through the

internet. Live Television and Radio channels are also can experience on the internet freely.

Now it is getting rare to go out door games and athletics. The new generation is getting used to playing online games. It is not rare to find out any piece of the game over the internet.

Social media is another well-known and charming matter among the young generation over the internet, today. It is a difficult task to find out a teenager who does not have social media account, at least one account. There are many kinds of social media sites, portals, and website on the internet forest. Most of the teenagers apply social media accounts to communicate with their friends and colleagues over the Internet. The trend of finding new friends of the new generation is social media portals over the internet. Most of the adolescents use social media sites to chat with their companions not only by voice chat but also by video. Moreover, it is very simple to create an email account, or any other social media account freely.

Other than these, new generation uses the internet for news, shopping, advertisement, banking and many more.

The atmosphere for use of Internet is wide. Some adolescents use their parents' devices to access the internet. Some have their own devices such as personal desktops, laptops, tabs and smart phones, etc. On the other hand, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is being rapidly developed. The internet access has been easier and faster than the past. The new technology, known as 4G (Fourth Generation) or LTE (Long-Term Evolution) is used for wireless communication of high-speed data for mobile phones and data terminals such as smart phones.

Broadband technology in Sri Lanka has been expanded its capacity with the concept of FTTH

(Fibre to the Home) technology, taking the speeds up to as much as 100 Mbps.

According to the statistics mentioned in the Annual Report of Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka (TRCSL) in 2014, it is about 2.5 million of Internet subscribers.

Many of the young generation use smart phones, desktop computers, laptop computers, tabs and such devices which support internet access easily, and

such appliances can be found in any house in Sri Lanka today.

A large number of Internet or cyber cafes can be availed in everywhere at a low cost. In such cafes, the internet can be used without any boundaries. Now, computer centers with the internet access facility are available in many schools in Sri Lanka.

A New project called School net 2 under the Broadband Initiative of TRCSL, High speed internet is provided to main schools in Island Wide.

The government aspiration is also to develop the infrastructure facility to be accessed the internet all over the island, specially, among the children. It is reported that about eight hundred (800) Nanasala centers have been already opened and utilized for the use of the internet.

The population of use of internet is increasing day by day because the rapid development of the Information and Communication Technology. Specially, the new generation is embracing the internet quickly and rapidly. As a result of this, the rate of occurrence of disputes based on the use of the internet is increasing rapidly.

There are some solutions that have been taken by authorities, as a remedy to safeguard the teenagers. Though the government has instructed the Internet Service Providers to constrict some pornographic websites, it is not quite enough to save the children from the internet evil. The amount of restricted website is very few. It is less than hundred. However, there are thousands of vulgar websites and portals that can be accessed easily and freely. Sometimes, in one click on a web link leads to a path more than thousands of links for different types of obscene web pages. On the other hand, it is not easy to restrict such sites. Sometimes, the restricted site can be posed in another name and in another way.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Now, the door has been opened completely to be accessed the internet without much difficulty for the young generation in Sri Lanka. There is no any proper door with a proper lock to enter the internet forest safely. However, it is necessary to have pre-prepared successful safeguard system when an adolescent enters into the internet. Because it is the nature, which the children quickly embrace the evil than the good. The younger generation has been

pushed into the internet jungle to benefit the internet. However, there is no any sufficient protection in the internet jungle to save the children by them- selves. There are different types of brutal, dangerous and fearful human animals in the internet jungle. These brutish human animals are always looking forward to their prey. Moreover, there is all manner of traps and pitfalls which cannot be recognized clearly even by a matured person.

A child specially a girl who never goes the boutique to shop without an adult has been dispatched alone to those above unprotected and complicated internet wood to play or study. However, how he or she can protect himself or herself is not an easy achievement. Many of the candidates who face to this interview fail simply.

It is not much difficult to cheat or mislead an adolescent who enters into the internet. A new comer does not have enough experiences about the evil deeds on the internet. Normally, a teenager is not armed with safeguard devices to fight with the internet enemies such as hackers, internet predators and cyber bullers, etc. it is reported that there are about twenty-five thousand (25000) cyber bullies in Sri Lanka amid the internet.

It was reported that Sri Lanka was the first in Google search to search “sex” via Google in last few years. Some boys had used the internet to revenge or wreak from their girlfriends publishing the girls’ naked images and videos on social web sites. Some politicians and racists use the internet to cheat and involve teenagers for their activities.

There are various types of Internet-related issues that can be categorized in some areas as mental issues, physical issues, social and economic issues, other issues.

The current position of different types of issues can be understood with the following mentioned information:

“Sri Lanka is the first in Google search searching “SEX” in past few years.

Incidents Reported to Sri Lanka CERT |CC

Table 2.1: List of The Incidents Reported to Sri Lanka CERT |CC

Incidents Reported to Sri Lanka CERT CC						
Type of Incident	Year	Year				

	2014	2013	Year 2012	Year 2011	Year 2010	Year 2009
Fishing	12	8	8	6	6	10
Abuse/Privacy	8	8	8	2	20	10
Scams	12	18	6	3	10	11
Malware	3	2	2	1	5	12
Defacements	56	16	15	20	8	15
Hate/Threat Mail	10	8	6	3	12	8
Unauthorized Access/Attempted	8	11	1	3	10	3
Fake Accounts						
Social Media	2250	1200	1100	1425	80	
Intellectual Property Violation	3	3	3	5		
DoS/DDoS	6	1	1	1		
Total	2368	1275	1150	1469	151	69

National Child Protection Authority of Sri Lanka says that information of international internet criminals about twenty-five thousand (25000) have been found.

Other than these, many kinds of pornography, suicides, fake love affairs, revenge, kidnappings, violent information, frauds, etc. were experienced in past few years.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

3.1 Main Objective

The main objective of this study project is “to minimize the evil influence of internet use on teenagers in Sri Lanka.”

3.2 Sub Objectives (Research Purpose)

To identify the issues arise over the internet use.

To identify the causes for issues arise over the internet use.

To make recommendations to minimize the rate of the issues.

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The Research Questions of this study survey are as follows:

What are the issues arise via the internet use on teenagers?

What are the causes for issues arise via the internet use?

How to mitigate the evil influence of the internet use on teenagers?

5. RELATED RESEARCHES

It was difficult to find out a complete research study on “Mitigation of the Evil Influence of Internet use on teenagers in Sri Lanka.”

However, Mr. Valdemar W. Setzer has published a review paper of the book by Gregory S. Smith (a Brazilian author) on “How to Protect Your Children on the Internet: A Road Map for Parents and Teachers”.

It describes and details the dangers that children and adolescents risk when using the Internet, and challenges parents to verify if they got the proper information about them. Thus it draws the attention on some technical and non-technical perspective precautions, tricks and strategies to protect the children.

Further, Mr. Chinthaka Wijewickrama, President of the Federation of Information Technology Industry of Sri Lanka (FITIS), speaks on the title of “How do we protect children from Internet and Facebook.”

To protect the children from the internet and face book, he says that as a precaution, computers should not be placed in an isolated area such as a room, where children can use it at their freewill without being seen or supervised. Moreover, under aged children accessing Facebook is not recommended. It is not at all advisable. Furthermore, use of parental control software is also helpful.

Accordingly, with the help of the above-mentioned literature reviews and the other observations, the issues arise via the internet use can be categorized in four areas as follows:

Mantel Issues

Physical Issues

Social Issues

Other Issues

Internet addiction, playing violent games, Risking chatting etc. can be introduced as Mental Issues. Physical Issues includes poor eye appearance, obesity, postural problems etc. Social Issues category includes Pornography/Sexing, online Prostitution, violent information, cyber fraud, drug trafficking, etc.

Other than these issues, Other Issues are being a victim of cyber space, the collapse of education, reduces of personality development, distancing from the family relationship, etc.

In this survey, I studied the prevailing issues in Sri Lanka and simple devices and basic non-technical strategies to protect the adolescents from the evil influence of the internet. Specially, how teenagers, parents and teachers can safeguard and sustain by themselves.

6. POPULATION & SAMPLE

The total population of the teenagers in this research study is two hundred thirty eight thousand and hundred and seven (238,107). It consists all the teenagers in Colombo District of Western Province in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, there are about thirteen (13) Divisional Secretariats in Colombo District. The sample size of this study survey is 60 teenagers in Colombo district. Individuals were studied at data collecting.

7. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

The formulated hypotheses in this research study are as follows:

There is an association between the lack of parents’ observation on teens’ internet related activities and the affected.

There is an association between the lack of awareness on issues arise via the internet use and the affected.

There is an association between the lack of parents’ guidance on the internet related activities and the affected.

8. SUMMARY OF THE RESPONSES OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

The responses of the respondents who were interviewed individually have been clearly summarized with percentage of the same in the following

presented table that is the able 8.1: Summary of The Responses of The Research Questionnaire.

Table 8.1: Summary of the Responses of the Research Questionnaire

Summary of the Responses of the Research Questionnaire “Mitigation of the Evil Influence of Internet Use on Teenagers”			
Sample Size	60		
Question Number		Amount	%
1. Age Group	13-16	25	42
	16-19	35	58
2. Schooling	Yes	43	72
	No	17	28
3. Gender	Male	34	57
	Female	26	43
4. Internet Use	Yes	43	72
	No	17	28
5. No. of hours per day on			
Education	Less than 2	11	18
	2 to 4	13	22
	More than 4	4	7
Play Online Games	Less than 2	4	7
	2 to 4	10	17
	More than 4	7	12
Social Media	Less than 2	14	23
	2 to 4	15	25
	More than 4	11	18
Other	Less than 2	9	15
	2 to 4	14	23

	More than 4	8	13
6. Device Owners	Yes	37	62
	No	6	10
7. Device (Yes)			
i. PC		11	18
ii. Lap Top		13	22
iii. Phone/Tab		28	47
8. Parents Observation	Yes	10	17
	No	33	55
9. Guidance By			
i. Parents	Yes	6	15
	No	37	
ii. Teachers	Yes	8	13
	No	35	
iii. Other	Yes	0	0
	No	0	0
10. Awareness on			
i. Mental Issues	Yes	7	22
	No	36	50
ii. Social Issues	Yes	17	28
	No	26	43
iii. Physical Issues	Yes	19	32
	No	24	40
iv. Other Issues	Yes	15	25
	No	28	47
11. Social Media Account Holders	Yes	40	67
	No	3	5
12. Use of true info	Yes	29	48
	No	11	18

13. Unknown cyber friends	Yes	40	67
	No	0	0
14. Cheated by cyber friend	Yes	15	25
	No	25	42
15. Plagiarism	Yes	6	10
	No	22	37
16. Access to adults only content	Yes	17	28
	No	18	30
17. Post of adults only content	Yes	6	10
	No	29	48

been affected by more than 1 issue.)

As a base, the teenager is a student. The free time of a student is at least 7 or 8 hours per day, excluding school time from morning to evening, (5.00 am to 3.00 pm). Usually, the free time is from 3.00 pm to 10.00 pm. Moreover, it is the sleeping time from 10.00 pm to 5.00 am

According to the evaluation of the above-mentioned table details, 20 students have spent more than four hours per day. It assures that they are being affected by the mental issues such as internet addiction. However, the students who have spent 4 hours on education can be released from this assume because spending time on education purpose can not be assumed as an addiction.

9. IDENTIFICATION OF THE AFFECTED TEENAGERS WITH THE EVIL INFLUENCE OF INTERNET USE

The responses for the question number 5, 14, 16 and 17 of the questionnaire are very critical.

Table 7.1: Summary of the Responses of the Question No. 5, 14, 16 & 17

Summary of the Responses of the Question No. 5, 14, 16 & 17		
Sample Size = 60		
Question Number	Amount	Category of Issue
Spending more than 4 hours		Mental Issues or Physical Issues
ii. Play online games	7	
iii. Social media	11	
iv. Other	8	
14. Cheated by cyber friend	15	Other Issues
16. Access to adults only content	19	Social Issues
17. Post of adults only content	6	
Total = 36 (At least affected by 1 issue, some have		

15 students have been cheated by an unknown cyber friend means they have become victims of cyber space. They are preys of cyber predators' or bullers' etc. So they are affected with the issues of other category.

19 students access adult only contents such as pornographic video, audio, text or images etc. Furthermore, 6 teens have published pornographic contents. So they can be assumed as the affected with social issues.

Therefore, 36 teenagers are affecting with issues of all categories which were described earlier. Here, some teenagers are affecting at least with one issue and some are affecting two or more issues.

As well as, they may use the internet in vain. It means, they destroy their valuable time, they corrupt their education, and they themselves tear down their lives.

Thus, in brief, these 36 teenagers can be concluded as the affected with the evil influence of internet use.

10. CONCLUSIONS

10.1 Conclusion on the Research Hypothesis

So, the conclusions on the Hypothesis can be concluded as follows:

For the first hypothesis, (There is an association between the lack of parents' observation on teenagers' internet related activities and the affected.) It could be proven as it is true. The association

between the lack of parents' observation on teenagers on their internet related activities and the evil influence of internet use is positive.

Hence, the evil influence of internet use can be mitigated by increasing the rate of parents' observation on teenagers' internet related activities. Therefore, I'd like to propose, as to increase the level of the parents' observation on teenagers' internet related activities.

For the second hypothesis (There is an association between the lack of awareness on issues arise via the internet use and the affected.), it can be assured that there is also an association between awareness on issues arises via the internet use and the affected.

Thus, the evil influence of internet use can be mitigated by improving the awareness on issues arises via internet use.

And, on the third hypothesis (There is an association between the lack of parents' guidance to teenagers on their internet use and the affected.), it can be confirmed that the association between the lack of parents' guidance to teenagers on their internet use and the affected is true. Here, the evil influence of internet use can be mitigated by improving the degree of guidance by parents to teenagers on their internet use.

10.2 Conclusion on the Research Questions and the Objectives

The 1st research question:

What are the issues arise via the internet use on teenagers?

The 1st sub objective:

To identify the issues arise over the internet use on teenagers.

The identified issues can be categorized into four:

Mental issues: (Internet addiction, moral corruption, Insomnia, play violent games, continuous chatting etc.)

Social issues: (Pornography/Sexing, violent information, suicides etc.)

Physical issues: (poor eye appearance, obesity, postural problems etc.)

Other issues: (Being a victim of cyber space, collapse of education, reduce of personality development, distancing from family relation- ship, plagiarism etc.)

Identification of the issues arise over the internet use were done. It could be proven that there were issues of all categories such as mental, physical and social and other types of issues with what teenagers were affected.

The second research question:

What are the causes for issues arise via the internet use?

The second sub objective:

To identify the causes for issues arise over the internet use.

The identified causes are as follows:

Lack of the parents' observation on teenagers' internet related activities.

Lack of the awareness on issues arise via the internet use among the teenagers, the parents and the teachers.

Lack of the parents' guidance to teenagers on their internet use.

The 3rd research question:

How to mitigate the evil influence of the internet use on teenagers?

The 3rd sub objective:

To make recommendations to minimize rate of the issues.

The overall goal of the research:

Mitigation of the evil influence of internet use on teenagers.

To achieve the main objective or overall goal "Mitigation of the evil influence of internet use on teenagers," other than the recommendations and suggestions done in the previous chapters, recommendations and suggestions are done as follows:

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations as solutions for issues to achieve the main objective, "to minimize the evil influence of Internet use on teenagers" are as follows:

1. To enhance the parents' observation on the teenagers' internet related activities.
2. To improve the awareness on issues arise via the internet use, among the teachers, parents and the teenagers.
3. To enhance of the parents' and teachers' guidance to the teenagers on their internet related activities.

12. FUTURE WORK

"To minimize the evil influence of Internet use on teenagers in Sri Lanka," a Spiritual Guidance may help much, especially, since all Sri Lankan teenagers accept and observe their religion. However, in this study, I was unable to perform such study. So, doing a proper research study on the spiritual study can be mentioned as a future study area.

This research study was not mainly focused on a technical view, as an example: use of internet blocking and filtering software, etc. So it is necessary to do an enough study on the technical perspective that helps to mitigate the evil influence of internet use on teenagers.

13. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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15. APPENDICES I

Questionnaire

Mitigation of the Evil Influence of Internet Use on Teenagers

Age Group : 13-16 16-19

Schooling: Yes No

Gender : Male Female

Do you use the internet?
 Yes No

If yes,
 How many hours per day do you spend on internet?
 Education
 Less than 2 2-4 More than 4

Play online games
 Less than 2 2-4 More than 4

iii. Social Media
 Less than 2 2-4 More than 4

Other
 Less than 2 2-4 More than 4

Do you use internet with your own device?
 Yes No

If yes,
 What is the internet access device you own?
 PC Laptop Phone/Tab

Do your parents observe your internet related activities?
 Yes No

Have you been advised on issues related to internet use by?
 Your parents Yes No
 Teachers Yes No
 Other Yes No

Are you aware on internet related issues such as
 Mental issues: (Internet addiction, violent games, continuous chatting etc.)
 Yes No

Social issues: (Pornography/Sexing, violent information, cyber fraud, etc.)
 Yes No

Physical Issues: (eye appearance, obesity, postural problems etc.)
 Yes No

Other issues: (Being a victim of cyber space, collapse of education, reduce of personality development, distancing from family relationship, plagiarism etc.)
 Yes No

Do you maintain social media accounts such as Face Book, Skype, Twitter, WhatsApp, Viber etc.?
 Yes No

Have you used true information in those accounts?
 Yes No

Do you have unknown online friends?
 Yes No

Have you been cheated by any of your cyber friend in any way.
 Yes No

Have you used educational articles published in the internet, in your academic assignments without citing the original source of the content?
 Yes No

Do you access the adults' only web contents? (Images, video, audio, text etc.)

Yes No

Have you posted adults only contents to the internet?
 Yes No

Thank you for your help