

ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SHAPING ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN NAGPUR

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of social media platforms in promoting environmental awareness among adolescents. With increasing access to digital technologies, platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp have become powerful tools for environmental communication. A descriptive survey method was used to measure awareness levels among students of colleges in Nagpur district. The paper concludes that social media can meaningfully enhance environmental awareness when content is credible, locally relevant, and engages users interactively. The study highlights the potential of digital platforms as transformative tools for environmental education.

Keywords: Social media, environmental awareness, young adults, Nagpur, digital learning, environmental communication.

Introduction

Today's youth are the future custodians of society, and it is the responsibility of educators and adults to equip them with meaningful learning experiences that empower them to make informed choices about the environment. Many scholars argue that environmental education (EE) plays a crucial role in preventing environmental degradation (Ozden, 2008). To make sound and responsible decisions, students not only need a strong understanding of environmental concepts but must also cultivate a personal bond with the natural world. A study conducted by Judith Cheng and Martha Monroe highlights the significance of developing such connections among young learners. Their research examined children's emotional attitudes toward nature after completing a mandatory EE program. The study focused on four key aspects of children's connection to nature: their enjoyment of natural settings, empathy toward living creatures, sense of unity with nature, and feeling of responsibility toward the environment. The findings indicated that a stronger connection with nature positively shaped children's intentions to engage in nature-related activities. Additionally, the perceived environmental values within their families and their sense of personal control enhanced their motivation to adopt environmentally responsible behaviors (Cheng & Monroe, 2010).

Literature Review

Social media platforms function as informal learning spaces where users encounter news, tutorials, narratives, and peer-generated content. Visual and short-form media are known to increase engagement and retention, especially among younger audiences. Platforms like YouTube and Instagram combine visual storytelling with easy sharing mechanics, accelerating the spread of environmental messages.

Social media is widely recognized as a powerful informal learning environment where users learn through interaction, multimedia content, and peer discussions. According to Greenhow and Lewin (2016), social media expands learning opportunities beyond classroom settings and promotes collaborative knowledge-building. For environmental topics, this is particularly relevant because visual and real-time content increases understanding and emotional connection (Khan, 2020).

In the Indian context, Singh and Sharma (2021) found that college students rely heavily on social media for environmental information because it offers quick, engaging, and relatable content.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of environmental awareness among young adults.
2. To analyze the extent of social media usage among adolescents.
3. To examine the relationship between social media engagement and environmental awareness.
4. To identify which platforms (YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc.) are most effective in spreading environmental information.

Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between social media usage and environmental awareness among adolescents.

H2: Adolescents who frequently view environmental content on social media have higher levels of awareness.

Research Methodology

1. Research Design-

The study follows a **descriptive survey research design**.

This design is appropriate because the study aims to describe how social media influences the environmental awareness levels of young adults without manipulating any variables. It helps to collect factual information about perceptions, usage patterns, and awareness levels.

2. Sample of the Study

The **sample** consists of **young adults aged 18–30 years** residing in **Nagpur city**.

3. Sample Size

The study will include a sample of **100 young adults** from Nagpur.

4. Sampling Technique

The study adopts **Non-Probability Purposive Sampling**.

Sampling Locations

Participants will be selected from:



Methodology

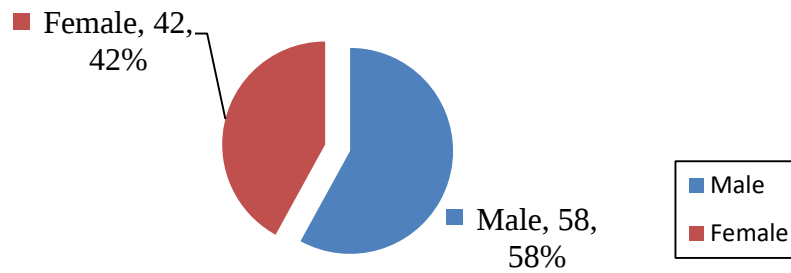
A questionnaire was formed and distributed among the respondents.

Data Analysis

1) A **structured questionnaire** was used for the research study.

Gender	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	58	58%
Female	42	42%

Table No. 01

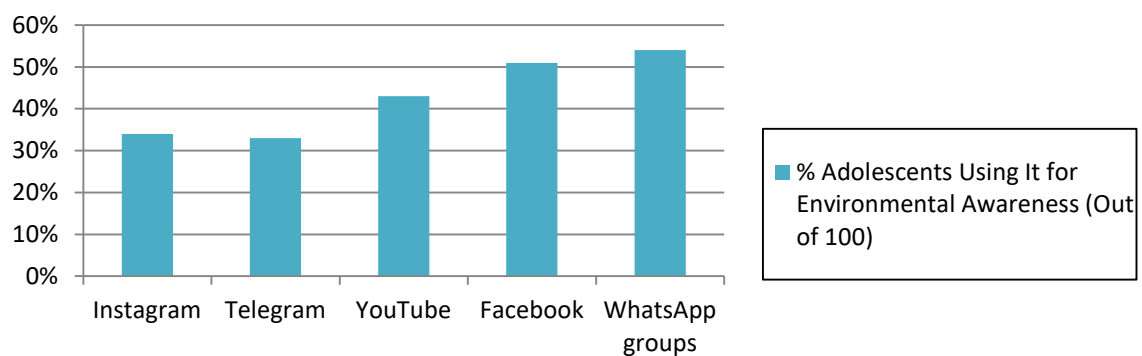


Graph No. 03- Gender wise Classification of Respondents

The table shows the gender composition of the respondents. out of the total participants, 58% were male, while 42% were female.

2) % Adolescents Using Social Media for Environmental Awareness

Platform	% Adolescents Using It for Environmental Awareness
Instagram	74%
Telegram	33%
YouTube	43%
Facebook	51%
WhatsApp groups	55%



Graph No. 01- Percentage Adolescents Using Social Media for Environmental Awareness (Out of 100)

Table No. 02

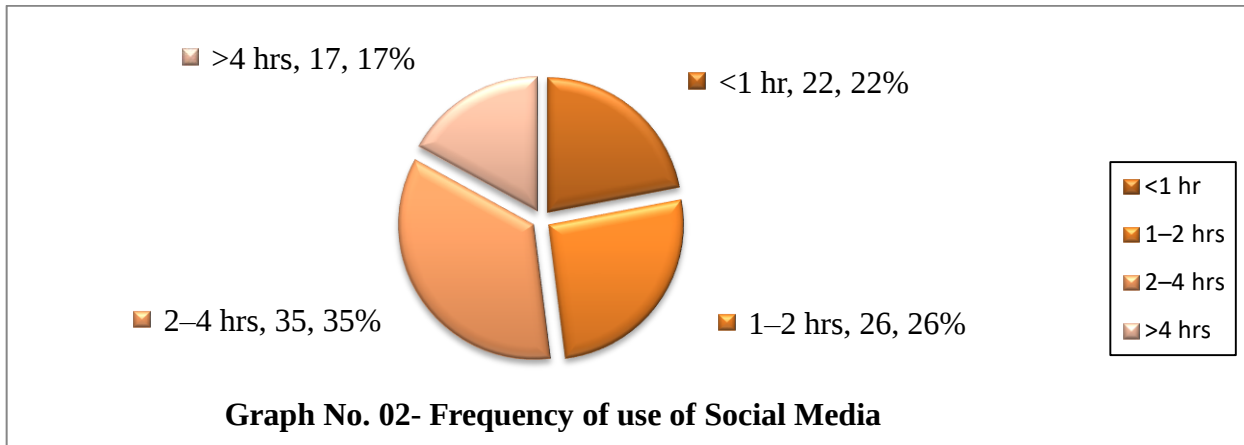
Interpretation-

The data indicate that Instagram (74%) is the most widely used platform among adolescents for environmental awareness, highlighting its strong influence due to visual content, short videos, and interactive features. WhatsApp groups (55%) and Facebook (51%) are also commonly used. YouTube (43%) serves as a source for detailed and educational video content, while Telegram (33%) is comparatively less utilized, possibly due to lower familiarity or limited reach among adolescents.

3) Frequency of use of Social Media

Usage Hours	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
<1 hr	10	10%
1–2 hrs	20	20%
2–4 hrs	45	45%
>4 hrs	25	25%

Table No. 03



From the graph it is clear that social media usage pattern of the respondents. Nearly **45%** of participants spend **2–4 hours per day** on social media, making it the most common usage category.

Conclusions

The study concludes that social media platforms play a significant and effective role in enhancing environmental awareness among adolescents. A large proportion of adolescents actively use platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube, which provide accessible, engaging, and interactive channels for disseminating environmental information. The findings further indicate that moderate to high daily social media usage increases adolescents' exposure to environmental messages, thereby positively shaping their knowledge, attitudes, and concern toward sustainability, climate change, and conservation practices. Social media also facilitates peer-to-peer learning, encourages participation in environmental campaigns, and supports the development of pro-environmental behaviors.

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