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Impact of Social Media on Teenage Girls of Nepal

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Abstract

Social media encompasses internet-based platforms that facilitate the formation of online communities and networks, enabling the real-time exchange of information, ideas, and perspectives. Through electronic content, including text, images, audio, and video, users interact and communicate via web-based applications on devices such as smartphones, tablets, and computers (Dollarhide, 2019). With platforms catering to both global and region-specific audiences, the scope of social media continues to expand. According to Chand and Zuckerman (2021), there are more than 500 social media sites worldwide, with 39 of the top 100 originating in the United States. Globally, social media is becoming an increasingly primary source of information (Newman et al., 2025). From an anthropological standpoint, it also plays a vital cultural role in the construction, deconstruction, and transmission of culture, from local traditions to global narratives and across generations. This study examines the impact of social media on teenage girls in Nepal, with a specific focus on a sample of 120 females aged 13 to 19 from Tarakeshwor Municipality, located in Kathmandu. The findings show that while a majority of participants perceive social media as a positive influence in their lives, nearly 70% reported encounters with fake profiles, and approximately 30% experienced some form of blackmail. These insights highlight the nature of social media: its potential to empower and connect, but also to expose users to harmful and predatory behavior, underscoring the urgent need for targeted interventions to safeguard vulnerable groups.

Keywords: *Social media, teenage females, cyber harassment, anthropology of social media, Nepal*

1. Introduction: Anthropological Study of Mass Media

The anthropological study of mass media began in the United States and Europe during the post–World War II period. Mass media were referenced in Benedict’s (1946) analysis of Japanese popular culture, while U.S. anthropologists, such as Bateson (1942), explored topics like film and national character, and Mead (1964) analyzed cross-cultural media communication. Although these pioneers investigated media phenomena, their focus tended to be peripheral, using media as a means to explore broader societal issues. An exception was Powdermaker’s (1950) ethnography of Hollywood, which received special attention for its concentrated examination of media production (Pardo et al., 2012).

Meanwhile, Sapir and Whorf contributed significantly to linguistic anthropology. Sapir (1985) argued that all social behavior is fundamentally communicative, involving symbolic acts such as gestures, imitation, and social suggestion, which are essential to maintaining social cohesion. Sapir emphasized that specific technologies often mediate these forms of communication.

Within the anthropological framework, culture is essential for human continuity—transmitted not merely through movement, but across time. Culture is memory. Culture is heritage. According to Osorio (2001), media serve as a mechanism for cultural transmission, intertwining memory, time, and identity. Mass media anthropologists study the processes by which media represent and reconfigure identity (e.g., gender, ethnicity, nationhood), often using symbolic rather than discursive tools (Coman, 2005). Today, media are no longer just outlets for representation—they are dynamic, interactive spaces that produce, challenge, and redistribute culture. Anthropologists now investigate not just “media content” but also media production,

reception, and use across digital spaces. Scholarly attention increasingly turns to the impact of mass communication on identity construction, community formation, and cultural circulation (Pardo et al., 2012).

2. Study Area and Sources of Data

This study focuses on Tarakeshwor Municipality Wards no. 8, 9, and 11 in Kathmandu, Nepal. The area was selected due to its accessibility, diverse social makeup, and increasing internet penetration. A mixed-method approach was used, combining a structured interview schedule with in-depth interviews. The sample includes 120 female teenagers aged 13 to 20 from educational institutions, college, and the workforce.

3. Mass Media: Global to Local Context

Mass media includes print, electronic, and digital forms, offering users tools for communication, networking, and self-representation (Editorial Office, 2024). Globally, digital media, especially social media, has overtaken traditional forms of news and communication. Kemp (2024) reports that over 62.6% of the global population uses social media, with users spending an average of 2 hours and 20 minutes daily (Chaffey, 2025). Globally, social media is increasingly becoming the primary source of information (Newman et al., 2025).

Table 1:

Global and Local Social Media

Social media	Global Social Media Statistics, 2025)	Nepal (Kemp, 2024 February 23: Nepal)
Facebook	3.07 billion	17 million (51.8% of the Total population)

YouTube	2.53 billion	0.85% of the total population
Instagram	2.00 billion	3.60 million
WhatsApp	2.00 billion	-
TikTok	1.59 billion	2.2 million (before ban)
WeChat	1.38 billion	-
Messenger	970 million	10.85 million
Snapchat	850 million	-
X	586 million	466.1 thousand
LinkedIn	1 billion	1.50 million

Source: Digital 2024 Global Overview Report

In the last decade, the swift rise of social networking platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and others has brought about notable shifts in the ways individuals connect and communicate. Currently, more than one billion people are active on Facebook, the largest social networking platform, and this figure is expected to increase significantly over time, particularly in developing nations. Facebook fulfills both personal and professional roles, leading to various benefits in connectivity, the sharing of ideas, and online learning. Additionally, the total number of social media users worldwide in 2019 reached 3.484 billion, marking a 9% year-on-year growth (Khalaf et al., 2023). Similarly, over the last ten years, social media users in the world have significantly increased. The Pew Research Center published a report in 2015, which mentioned that 71% of individuals aged 13 to 17 were using Facebook, 52% were on Instagram, and 41% engaged with Snapchat. Furthermore, teenage girls are engaging more often with image-centric social media platforms than boys; 61% of

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girls utilize Instagram compared to 44% of boys. This rise in social media engagement, especially on Facebook and Instagram, may have adverse effects on the self-esteem and body image satisfaction of adolescent girls and young women (Lenhart, 2015). This data indicates the use of social media by teenage girls and boys around the globe. According to Statista (2025), a global platform for data and business insights, it was estimated that there were approximately 3.2 billion social media users in Asia as of early 2025. Among these users, 1.3 billion were from Eastern Asia and 1.1 billion from Southern Asia (Dixon, 2025). Evidence indicates that a majority of the middle class engage with social media platforms in various daily activities. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) (2010) forecasts that in the South Asia region, the middle-class population, which was 1 billion in 2011, is expected to reach 1.2 billion by 2030 and 1.4 billion by 2050 (Gyanwali, 2025).

While a significant segment of Nepal's population falls beneath the poverty line, a household survey carried out in 26 districts in 2070 BS indicates that 40% of people live in poverty (Gyanwali, 2020). However, a growing number of citizens are recognizing the benefits of the Internet, leading to substantial improvements in Internet accessibility throughout Nepal. Over the past five years, the rate of internet penetration in Nepal has improved by seven percentage points each year. As reported by the Nepal Telecom Authority, 2.25 million individuals connected to the internet in 2017, averaging about 250 new users every hour. The rise in internet adoption in Nepal is fueled by the growing influence of social media and online communication channels, a surge in mobile phone connections and smartphone usage, as well as a rise in various applications, including entertainment, music streaming, and online shopping. This access to digital facilities also promotes digital journalistic media. Registration of 66% of the total national number of mass media in Bagmati Province (Dhungel, 2020) is an indicator of the concentration of access to digital platforms.

The surging interest in social media significantly contributes to the increasing internet usage in Nepal. In South Asia, Nepal ranks just behind Bhutan in terms of social media user penetration. As of 2025, 49.6% of Nepal's population had access to the internet (Kemp, 2024). Facebook remains the dominant platform with over 95% market share among Nepali social media users (StatCounter, 2025). A significant number of users reside in Kathmandu Valley, highlighting urban digital centrality (Acharya, 2022).

Table 2:
Distribution of Social Media Users in Nepal

Date	Facebook (%)	X (%)	YouTube (%)	Instagram (%)	LinkedIn (%)
2024-03	93.09	4.92	1.32	0.37	0.14
2025-01	91.34	5.59	2.03	0.43	0.4
2025-02	95.53	2.96	0.75	0.36	0.22
2025-03	95.14	3.42	0.76	0.33	0.19

Source: Stat Counter, 2025

Drawing from Acharya’s (2022) survey, social media use has become deeply embedded in the everyday experiences of Nepali people, shaping both social interaction and patterns of communication. According to the Center for Media Research, Nepal, the survey covered 403 respondents from 63 districts, revealing that a large majority—over 92%—turn to social media to pass the time and access news and information. Similarly, above 90% engage with these platforms to connect with friends, and nearly 88% use them to express personal feelings and opinions. Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter remain particularly popular, with most participants

maintaining accounts on both, typically accessed through mobile devices. Multiplicity of accounts, including many anonymous profiles, was a distinct feature among younger users. Acharya's findings further show that for much of Nepali society, social media now functions not only as a tool for communication and self-expression but also as an engine for social and political transformation. At the same time, concerns about misinformation and the platform’s influence on public attitudes are growing, highlighting the complex role of social media in contemporary Nepal.

These trends illustrate the influence of global digital infrastructures on local identities, behavior, and social interaction. Social media has not only introduced new communication forms but also reshaped how culture and gender intersect in real-time.

4. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

4.1 Age Group of Respondents

Younger generations tend to prefer engaging with newer and different forms of communication rather than traditional methods. This trend is a global occurrence and is not limited to Nepal. The age demographic of the respondents is significant in this study. The age distribution of the respondents is shown in the following table.

Table 3:

Distribution of the Respondents by Age

Age Group	Number of Respondents	Percentage
12-14	8	6.67
15-16	36	30
17-18	52	43.33
19-20	24	20
Total	120	100

Source: Field Study, 2024.

Table 3 displays the ages of the respondents. The average age of participants was 17.03 years. Among all respondents, 6.67% belonged to the 12–14 age group. The 15–16 age category comprised 30% of respondents. Around 43.33% of respondents were in the 17–18 age group, while 20% were from the 19–20 age group. The majority of respondents were from the 17–18 age range, who are +2 students studying in different higher secondary schools. Regardless of age, all respondents were female students who fell within the teenage category.

As shown, most respondents (43.33%) are aged 17–18, aligning with higher secondary schooling. The mean age is 17.03 years, indicating that the sample represents the teenage population effectively.

4.2 Educational Level

Social media and the use of social media in daily activities are also aspects of education. Due to modern technology, today's education system is increasingly guided by smart learning. Since education is considered the backbone of any country, the level of education determines the delivery of knowledge and its utility. The main educational levels of respondents are categorized into two groups: school-level education and higher education. According to the education system of Nepal, "illiterate" refers to individuals unable to read and write their name; "school level" refers to those who can read and write their name and are enrolled in school, specifically at the primary and secondary levels. It is now categorized as primary (classes 1–8), secondary (classes 9–12), and higher education (bachelor's to master's level). The following table shows the education levels of the respondents.

Table 4:

Distribution of Respondents According to their Education

Level of Education	Number of Respondents	Percent
Primary Level (class 1-8)	8	6.67
Secondary Level (class 9-12)	60	50
Higher education (Bachelor +)	52	43.33
Total	120	100

Source: Field Study, 2024.

Table 4 shows that most respondents were literate, with 50% belonging to the secondary education level. Secondary-level respondents are those students who have completed primary education. 6.67% of respondents were at the primary level, and 43.33% were at the higher education level. This data indicates that secondary-level students are mostly involved in social media.

4.3 Caste and Ethnic Composition

Social, religious, cultural, and geographical diversity, along with variations in caste and ethnicity, are significant features of the context of Nepal. Caste and ethnic groups are crucial social classifications within Nepali society, influencing lifestyle, professional status, living standards, educational attainment, and various other aspects of society. The caste and ethnic groups of respondents are shown in the following table.

Table 5:

Distribution of Respondents According to the Caste/Ethnicity

Caste/Ethnicity	Respondents	Percentage
Brahman	28	23.33
Kshatri	48	40
Ethnic groups	24	20
Dalit	20	16.67
Total	120	100

Source: Field Study, 2024

The Kathmandu district serves as a hub for various castes and ethnicities. Similarly, Tarakeshwor Municipality Ward No. 8 reflects this diversity found throughout the Kathmandu district. The table presented indicates that 23.33% of the respondents identified as Brahman, while 40% were Chhetri. Additionally, 20% and 16.67% of respondents were from ethnic groups and Dalit communities, respectively. The ethnic group primarily consists of individuals from the Matawali community, and Dalit individuals are often categorized as members of the untouchables in Nepalese society. Among these groups, 40% of Chhetri individuals engage with social media, the highest percentage compared to the rest.

4.4 Duration of Social Media Experience

Social media has become an integral part of life for people in general, and teenage students in particular. The time span from when respondents first opened their social media accounts to the date of the interview is considered the duration of social media use. Students reported varying durations of use, as shown in the table below.

Table 6:

Duration of Using Social Media

Duration	Respondents	Percent
For a month	8	6.67
For one year	28	23.33
For more than a year	84	70
Total	120	100

Source: Field Study, 2024

Table 6 shows that 70% of the respondents have been utilizing social media for over a year. Additionally, 6.67% have started using it within the last month, while 23.33% indicated usage for approximately one year. Based on this data, we can conclude that a significant proportion of teenage students in this area have been active on social media for over a year, suggesting long-term engagement with digital platforms.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Purpose of Social Media Use

The use and purpose of social media vary depending on the youth’s time, situation, and circumstances. Young people use social media for different purposes, as reported in the table below.

Table 7:

Purpose of Use of Social Media

Purpose	Number of Respondents	Percent
Entertainment/Chat	72	60
Time pass	20	16.67
For knowledge	28	23.33
Total	120	100.0

Source: Field Study, 2024

The table indicates that 60 percent of participants use social media for entertainment or chatting. Meanwhile, 16.67% reported using it to pass the time, and 23.33% use it for gaining knowledge. This data shows that, primarily, social media serves as a source of amusement or a way to pass the time. Only a smaller portion uses it in an intentional, educational manner. Notably, no respondents reported using platforms like Gmail for communication. One X (formerly Twitter) user mentioned that the platform helps them access academic knowledge, while the majority described their use as casual and social. Most respondents talked about social media as a space to connect with friends and enjoy shared content, whereas only a minority viewed it as a tool for knowledge production. Social media platforms allow users to create profiles, upload photos and videos, send messages, and keep in touch with friends, family, and colleagues. The research shows that 60% of social media users spend most of their time chatting. Respondents reported using the platform for news and information (20%) and photo/status uploads (16.67%) in nearly equal numbers, while only 3.33% use it for practical apps like e-banking or accessing e-books. This suggests that among

teenagers, the chat feature is the most frequently used functionality on social media platforms. As seen in Table 7, most respondents (60%) use social media for entertainment and chatting. Only 23.33% use it for knowledge or education, indicating its primary use as a recreational tool.

5.2 Types of Social Media Used

In today’s digital world, a wide range of social media platforms is available. Each serves specific purposes and user needs. Academics and professionals frequently utilize email and LinkedIn, whereas younger people tend to favor platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and X. The wider public generally exhibits a greater usage of Facebook.

Table 8:

Types of Social Media (multiple answers)

Types	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook/Messenger	92	76.67
Viber	12	10
X	4	3.33
WhatsApp	12	10
FB/Messenger and Viber	12	10
FB/Messenger, Viber, and WhatsApp	28	23.33

Source: Field Study, 2024

According to the study, 76.67% of respondents reported using Facebook or Messenger as their primary social media platform. Only 10% were using Viber, and another 10% were using WhatsApp. X was used by 3.33% of respondents. In addition, 10% used both Facebook/Messenger and Viber, while 23.33% of total NCCS Research Journal, 4 (1), 20-48

respondents used a combination of Facebook/Messenger, Viber, and WhatsApp. Interestingly, the results show that rural girls are generally less likely to use platforms like X.

5.3 Common Features Used

Chatting (60%) is the most-used feature, followed by news access and photo/status sharing (Table 8). Very few respondents use social media for banking or educational tools, despite the platforms’ capabilities.

Table 9:

Features of Social Media

Feature	Frequency	Percent
News and Information	24	20
Photo/Status upload	20	16.67
Chat	72	60
e-banking and e-book	4	3.33
Total	120	100

Source: Field Study, 2024

5.4 Social Media and Abuse

Today, social media is used not only for entertainment and educational purposes but also for harmful activities such as sexual harassment, hacking, and cybercrimes. The following table outlines the types of social media abuse experienced by teenage girls.

Table 10:

Abuses Faced by Respondents

Abuses	Frequency	Percentage
Harassment	28	23.33
Domination	64	53.33
Love Propose	20	16.67
Bad Comments	8	6.67
Total	120	100

Source: Field Visit, 2024

According to the findings, 23.33% of respondents reported experiencing harassment. The majority (53.33%) said they had been dominated by male colleagues during social media interactions. Additionally, 16.67% of respondents received romantic proposals—often with implications of marriage—through social media. Another 6.67% were victims of inappropriate or offensive comments posted on their statuses or photos. These results suggest that many teenage girls face issues such as domination, harassment, and unsolicited romantic advances in digital spaces.

Teenage students may also misuse social media for immoral purposes, including the use of inappropriate language, threats, and unethical hacking. These behaviors contribute to broader social problems such as sexual harassment, substance abuse, performative lifestyles, impulsive elopements, feelings of frustration, and in extreme cases, suicide.

Table 11:

Respondents' Perception of the Abuse of Social Media

Problems of social media	Respondents	Percentage
Black mailing	38	31.66
Fake account	82	68.34
Total	120	100

Source: Field Study, 2024

Further analysis reveals that fake accounts are a significant issue in the study area. Data shows that 68.34% of participants have encountered fake accounts, and 31.66% have experienced blackmail. These figures underline how social media can pose serious risks for teenage girls—even as new laws and security policies are introduced. This persistence of misbehavior shows that for many adolescents, social media remains a vulnerable space, often exploited for illegal and damaging activities.

5.5 Language in Social Media

English has become the dominant language in global academic and digital communication, comprising 75% of editorial teams and 70% of authorship in key journals. However, contributions from low-income countries remain minimal (Andersen & Hellman, 2021). In the study area, most respondents prefer using Roman Nepali on social media. Roman Nepali refers to the use of the English alphabet to write in the Nepali language.

Table 12:

Distribution of Respondents According to Language in Social Media

Languages	Frequency	Percentage
Roman Nepali	96	80
Pure Nepali	8	6.67
Pure English	16	13.33
Total	120	100

Source: Field Study, 2024

The findings show that 80% of respondents primarily use Roman Nepali. Meanwhile, 6.67% reported using only the Nepali language, and 13.33% use pure English to communicate on social media. Those using English generally come from English-speaking households or have studied in private schools. Similarly, respondents from more educated family backgrounds showed a higher likelihood of using English.

Most respondents prefer Roman Nepali (Table 12). This hybridized digital communication style blends global form with local meaning. Romanized scripts serve as a “conscious script choice” (Androutsopoulos, 2013, p. 88) for Nepali youth in digital spaces.

5.6 Impacts of Social Media

Every phenomenon has two sides—positive and negative—and social media is no exception. With increasing digital connectivity, social media has become deeply embedded in the everyday lives of people, especially teenagers. Many people use it for business activities, learning opportunities, accessing news, and staying connected. At the same time, it is also a space filled with privacy risks, cyberbullying, digital

addiction, disinformation, and morally questionable content. Unethical hacking, online scams, fraud, and emotional distress are part of the growing problems associated with social media use. When examining education, social media plays a pivotal role—from early years to higher education—by facilitating learning, sharing resources, and promoting engagement. Positive effects also include global connections, marketing opportunities, stress relief, and awareness-building. However, negatives such as violent content, intrusive ads, superficial relationships, time wastage, and exposure to harmful themes are equally significant—particularly for teenagers whose mental health is still developing.

There is extensive research on the impacts of social media on teenagers. A report published by Common Sense Media (2022) regarding the impact of social media on teenagers found that nearly half of the 1,500 adolescents surveyed indicated that social media plays a significant role in providing support and advice, reducing feelings of loneliness, fostering creativity, and maintaining connections with friends and family. Additionally, 43 percent mentioned that engaging with social media helps alleviate feelings of depression, stress, or anxiety. One-third of teenagers experiencing depression reported frequent social media usage, in contrast to 18 percent of those without depressive symptoms. Another study carried out by University College London monitored the social media habits of 13,000 adolescents over a period of three years, beginning when they turned 13. The teenagers also provided self-reports on their social media experiences alongside their emotional states and overall well-being. The findings highlighted three primary consequences for teenagers: insufficient sleep, encounters with cyberbullying, and reduced physical activity. Consequently, these factors led to missed opportunities for the positive effects that exercise can have on both mental and physical health. (Rideout et al., 2022). There are different types of impacts of social media on teenage girls. The following two are explained here.

5.6.1 Cyberbullying

According to McAfee (2022), cyberbullying is defined as bullying that occurs through digital devices such as cell phones, computers, and tablets. It encompasses the act of sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, untrue, or hurtful content about another person. This behavior can manifest across various social media platforms. Facebook reports the highest prevalence of cyberbullying among children, with 53% having witnessed it and 50% having experienced it, while Instagram follows with 40% witnessing and 30% experiencing. YouTube has 31% witnessing and 27% experiencing, TikTok has 30% witnessing and 23% experiencing, and Twitter shows 20% witnessing and 18% experiencing cyberbullying on a global scale.

Cyberbullying leads to emotional distress and can worsen the symptoms of anxiety, depression, and feelings of isolation among teenagers. According to the Pew Research Center's study (Anderson & Vogels, 2022), 46 percent of teenagers in the US, aged 13 to 17, have faced bullying or harassment online. The report indicated that 54% of girls between the ages of 15 and 17 have encountered at least one of six types of cyberbullying, whereas 44% of boys aged 15 to 17 and 41% of boys and girls aged 13 to 14 have experienced similar situations (Newport Editorial Team, 2025). Cook (2024), in "Cyberbullying data, facts and statistics for 2018 – 2024," stated that 60 percent of parents with children aged 14 to 18 reported their kids being bullied in 2019, with 59.9% falling within the 14-18 age range and 56.4% in the 11-13 age group (Bischoff, 2022). Of those bullied, 82.8% reported being targeted at school, 32.5% on the bus, 19.2% on social media platforms, 11% via text messages, and 7.9% through online video games (Bischoff in Comparitech, 2022). Furthermore, a study by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) discovered that 19.7% of college students had engaged in cyberbullying at least once during their lifetime, while 54.4% reported having experienced it at least once (Ozden & Icellioglu, 2014).

5.6.2 Positive and Negative Impacts of Social Media

Social media offers both benefits and harm. Positively, it enables access to information, connection, peer learning, and psychological support (boyd, 2014). Negatively, it enables trolling, misinformation, addiction, and identity-based violence.

Table 13:

Impacts of Social Media

Positive aspects of social media	Negative aspects of social media
Staying Connected	Distraction and Loss of Productivity
Access to News and Current Events	Spread of Misinformation
Platform for Personal Branding	Compromise Privacy and Data Vulnerabilities
Business and Marketing Opportunity	Promotes Superficial Connections
Convenience and Ease of Access	Social Media Addiction
Fosters Innovation and Learning	Enables Bullying and Harassment
Provides Entertainment	Promotes Social Isolation
Platform for Societal Change	Causes Depression and Anxiety
Promotes Skill Development	Promotes Obsessive Self-Presentation
Supplement to Education	Helps Spread Scams and Frauds

Source: Raghavan, 2024

According to field data, 76.67% of participants perceived social media as a positive influence in their day-to-day lives. They reported benefits such as increased knowledge, better communication, and broader social awareness. On the other hand, 23.33% described its consequences as negative, citing time-wasting, sexual abuse, emotional distress, depression, and cybercrime. These results show that social media is both a beneficial and troubling force—its impact depends largely on intent, usage habits, and user awareness. The data show that 76.67% of girls see its advantages, but a significant 23.33% associate it with various harms—highlighting its dual nature (Table 14). Especially worrying is how such spaces become zones of performative pressure, often leading to deteriorated self-esteem among teens (O’Reilly et al., 2018).

Table 14:

Distribution of Respondents about the Impact of Social Media

Impacts	Descriptions	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	Health/quality of life	48	40
	Education/sharing of knowledge and information	44	36.67
Negative	Wasting time	8	6.67
	Victims of wrong users	20	16.67
	Total	120	100

Source: Field Visit, 2024

6. Conclusion

Social media has become one of the most widely used and deeply embedded forms of communication in contemporary life, extending far beyond casual conversation to shape daily practices of expression, education, identity, and social interaction. It operates through a complex system of electronic texts, images, videos, and sounds that allow users to engage with content across mobile devices, computers, and internet-based platforms. This interactivity, combined with immediate access and global reach, has made social media central not only to personal communication but also to education, entertainment, marketing, and civic engagement. Its technological framework affects both the quantity and quality of information available and the speed at which it is accessed and shared.

In the context of Nepal, and specifically among teenage girls in Tarakeshwor Municipality, social media plays a powerful yet contradictory role. Data from the field show that 60% of the respondents use social media primarily for entertainment and chatting, 16.67% to pass the time, and only 23.33% for seeking or sharing knowledge. This highlights that while social media holds educational potential, its usage among teenagers is largely recreational. However, the study also reveals notable benefits: approximately 76.67% of teenage girls consider social media to be a positive influence in their lives, often using it to stay informed, connected, and engaged with peers.

At the same time, social media presents serious risks. A significant portion (23.33%) reported experiences of harassment, including verbal abuse, unwanted advances, and negative comments. More than half of these incidents were perpetrated by male peers, underlining the persistence of gendered power dynamics in digital spaces.

Additionally, 68.34% of respondents had encountered fake accounts and 31.66% had been victims of blackmail—exposing how online platforms can become fertile ground for exploitation, misinformation, and emotional manipulation.

From an anthropological perspective, social media serves as both a tool and a site of cultural production, reproducing norms, shaping identities, and mediating behavioral change. It reflects and reinforces social structures such as caste, education, ethnicity, and gender. Interactions on platforms like Facebook, through likes, friend counts, and comments, affect how teenage users perceive themselves and others, with measurable effects on self-esteem, social belonging, and emotional well-being.

This study affirms that social media is a double-edged space: it empowers, connects, and entertains, but it can also isolate, manipulate, and harm. For teenage girls navigating educational, social, and emotional transitions, the digital world mirrors real-world tensions, offering opportunities for growth along with exposure to risk. These findings underscore the urgency for digital literacy initiatives, gender-sensitive cyber safety policies, and ongoing community engagement to ensure that the digital future is inclusive, safe, and empowering for all.

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