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Mobile Addiction Consequences



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A Review of the Mobile Addiction and the Associated Traits

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Introduction Abstract

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Phone addiction invites pertinent crisis among Nepali children

"In homes, classrooms, and even quiet or crowded places like parks and restaurants, children can be seen with their eyes fixed on screens. What may seem like a harmless distraction has quietly grown into a serious concern: phone addiction among children, especially those under 13.

"Traditionally, addiction referred to substances like alcohol and drugs," Dr. Pawan Sharma, a consultant psychiatrist at Patan Hospital told THT. "However, behavioral addictions, such as mobile phone addiction, share similar traits, including a rewarding experience, loss of control, and negative consequences. Phone addiction can start as early as age 2-3, often when parents use screens to calm children. By ages 8-10, many spend hours daily on screens, affecting their health, learning, and behavior."

While smartphones have become essential tools for communication and education, their excessive and unsupervised use can be damaging, particularly to young children whose brains and emotional understanding are still developing. In Nepal, like in any other place of the world, this problem is rapidly growing."

Background

Since the inception of the Mobile phone in the 1980's, humans have been taught and coerced into the thought process that we need the 'phone' with us permanently. Before the Phone was simply an occasional communication tool, and it usually had pride of place within the easy to reach hall of our homes or more obviously on the office desk.

However, once mobile, and rechargeable, we became afraid of missing a call, then as messaging progressed and VDU abilities developed, afraid of missing the message. No longer could we wait until we enter a room where the landline was connected.

Then the industry identified the power of advertising, initially capturing the individuals desire 'to communicate' constantly, with friends, mostly about trivia, as costs dramatically reduced from traditional landline bills.

Initially via SMS messaging, and very quickly through live VDU display messaging. The Mobile enabled privacy, and the ability to ensure effectively safe spaces away from others overhearing conversations and more so, from others reading private messages. This evolved to include photos and soon videos. And the ability to share documents, offering the excuses of work and essential usage. The genie was out of the box.

Simply, 'gaming' took hold, which with the technology development, became very sophisticated, real-like and was the introduction to addictive practices, designed to keep you online.

Next came the ability for the open source Applications, specifically targeting interest groups and next the general 'can't live without' activities. It has become endless, much has been illicit, much educational, most general information.

Nowadays, since the 2000's the development of fake news, spam information, scam sales, pornography, violence, self-harm advocacy, much originally stemming from the gaming industry.

Nowadays the term 'Phone addiction' is the obsessive use of a smartphone. This behavioral addiction is often dubbed as "nomophobia," or the fear of being without a mobile device. People with a phone addiction may experience anxiety, agitation, and disorientation if they are unable to use or have access to their smartphone. In reality, afraid of missing 'something'. Which might include, a call, a message, a news item, gossip, or the ability to comment on a trending discussion, in the belief that it will adversely affect your present or future or indeed the opinion of others about yourself.

Phone addiction may lead to, amplify, or make you believe in its ability to cause:

- Sleep deficit
- Lower concentration
- Creativity blocks
- Aggravated ADD
- Anxiety
- Reduced cognition

- Stress
- Loneliness
- Insecurity
- Impaired relationships
- Poor grades
- Psychological disorders

Chronic phone use can also cause other physical dysfunctions, like GABA (a neurotransmitter in the brain) dysfunction and a loss of grey matter in the brain, which are highly correlated to substance use disorders.

Below are a few ways to discern if someone has signs and symptoms of a phone addiction:

- Lying about smartphone use.
- Loved ones expressing concern.
- Neglect or trouble completing duties at work, school, or home.
- More and more time using a phone.
- Checking peoples' profiles repeatedly due to anxiety.
- Accidents or injury due to phone use.
- Working later to complete tasks.
- Weak or non-existent social life.
- Fear of missing out.
- Isolation from loved ones.
- A feeling of lack of connection.
- Angry or irritated if phone use is interrupted.
- Getting up at night to check a phone.
- Reaching for the phone the moment they are alone or bored.
- Phantom vibrations (thinking the phone buzzes when it doesn't).
- Limiting phone use is difficult.
- Craving access to a smartphone or another device.

It is essential to remember that there is no specific amount of time, frequency, or messages sent that indicates phone addiction. Yet an accumulation of the above warning signs is an indicator of an underlying phone use problem.

Ok so what are the other issues surrounding over use of the mobile phone, what does it make you vulnerable to?

Mobile devices are susceptible to a wide range of vulnerabilities, making them prime targets for cyberattacks. These vulnerabilities stem from both the devices themselves and the way users interact with them. Key threats include malware, phishing attacks, insecure Wi-Fi connections, data leaks, and the risk of lost or stolen devices. Understanding these vulnerabilities is crucial for implementing effective security measures.

Threats can be classified into four different categories; direct, indirect, veiled, conditional. A direct threat identifies a specific target and is delivered in a straightforward, clear, and explicit manner.

- A **direct threat** identifies a specific target and is delivered in a straightforward, clear, and explicit manner.
- An **indirect threat** tends to be vague, unclear, and ambiguous. The plan, the intended victim, the motivation, and other aspects of the threat are masked or equivocal.
- A **veiled threat** is one that strongly implies but does not specifically threaten violence.
- A **conditional threat** is the type of threat often seen in extortion cases. It warns that a violent act will happen unless certain demands or terms are met.

Impact can include generating any of these vulnerabilities:

- **Financial fraud:** Stolen financial information can be used for unauthorized transactions.
- **Identity theft:** Personal information can be used to open fraudulent accounts or access existing ones.
- **Reputational damage:** Security breaches can damage an individual's or organization's reputation.
- **Loss of privacy:** Spyware and other malware can monitor and record personal activities without consent.
- **Legal and financial consequences:** Data breaches can result in legal penalties and financial losses.

Allowing young children to use mobile devices can pose several risks, including:

1. **Screen Time and Health Issues**:
   - **Physical Health**: Prolonged screen time can lead to sedentary behavior, contributing to obesity and related health issues.
   - **Vision Problems**: Extended use can cause eye strain and discomfort, potentially leading to long-term vision problems.
2. **Developmental Concerns**:
   - **Social Skills**: Excessive device use can hinder face-to-face interactions, impacting social development and communication skills.
   - **Attention Span**: Rapid content consumption can contribute to shorter attention spans and difficulties in focusing on tasks.
3. **Cognitive Effects**:
   - **Learning Disruption**: Over-reliance on devices for entertainment or education may reduce engagement in more beneficial activities like reading or imaginative play.
   - **Content Exposure**: Children may encounter inappropriate or harmful content, which can affect their understanding of the world.
4. **Addiction and Dependency**:
   - **Screen Addiction**: Children may develop a dependency on devices for entertainment, leading to withdrawal symptoms when they are not using them.
   - **Behavioral Issues**: Increased screen time can correlate with behavioral problems, including aggression or anxiety.
5. **Privacy and Safety**:
   - **Online Risks**: Exposure to online predators, cyberbullying, and inappropriate interactions can pose significant dangers.
   - **Data Privacy**: Children may inadvertently share personal information, compromising their privacy and safety.
6. **Sleep Disruption**:
   - **Sleep Quality**: Using devices, especially before bedtime, can interfere with sleep patterns and quality, leading to fatigue and irritability.
7. **Impact on Family Dynamics**:
   - **Reduced Interaction**: Increased device use can reduce meaningful family interactions, leading to weaker family bonds.

To mitigate these risks, it's essential for parents and caregivers to set appropriate limits on device use, encourage alternative activities, and actively engage with children about their online experiences

Addiction means not simply the viewing of content but also the constant possession of the smartphone, which bring about a variety of risks including the following dangers for you and your child. Such as cyberbullying, unprotected use of social networking, access to unsuitable content on the internet, eye strain, decreased attention span, and phone theft and multiple repairs and breakages, plus escalating costs of additional apps upon the account.

Cyberbullying which can lead to a variety of induced risks

Cyberbullying is the use of technology to harass, threaten, embarrass, or target others, often more common in secondary school than primary school, and can lead to legal consequences and potential jail time. The internet offers limited accountability and no filter, making cyberbullying easier and less restrictive. However, it can harm someone's online reputation and involve others in the process, as content can be reposted or shared, either positively or negatively.

Cyberbullying can be detrimental to a person's mental and physical health. Victims can experience significant social isolation and feel unsafe. It can lead to emotional and physical harm, loss of self-esteem, feelings of shame and anxiety, concentration and learning difficulties. online bullying, like other kinds of bullying, can lead to serious long-lasting problems. The stress of being in a constant state of upset or fear can lead to problems with mood, energy level, sleep, and appetite. It also can make someone feel jumpy, anxious, or sad.

In extreme cases, Cyberbullying is also associated with suicidal thoughts, suicidal attempts and suicide. Research reveals that both cyberbullying and adolescent suicide are increasing in the United States, with nearly 14% of adolescents making a serious suicide attempt in relation to cyberbullying. Nepal needs be aware. The smart phone offer access to any child in possession with an account to be individually targeted by remote, invisible and often untraceable persons of any age or gender.

Steps to Overcome Mobile Addiction

How to counter addictive use of the smartphone: 1.Turn devices off and leave them in another room overnight to charge. Instead of reading eBooks on your phone or tablet at night, pick up a book. You'll not only sleep better but research shows you'll also remember more of what you've read. Replace your smartphone use with healthier activities

1. **Acknowledge the Problem.**
2. **Set Boundaries.**
3. **Turn Off Notifications.**
4. **Replace Screen Time with Real-Time Activities.**
5. **Practice Mindful Use.**
6. **Declutter Your Phone.**
7. **Take a Digital Detox.**
8. **Seek Support if Needed.**