Web Technology and the Changing Pattern of Relationship: A Study on Urban Youth in Dhaka City

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Abstract: In the era of neoliberal society a phenomenon is taking place dramatically and is changing the previous modes of communication very sharply and every ages people especially the active part (Youth) of internet user are facing more changes than anybody else. The pattern of communication using internet technology has changed the way we manage our everyday interaction with our near and dear ones and it is very important as it is a supplement of the close of face to face interaction. Using quantitative method data were collected through semi structured questioner from two universities namely Dhaka University and BRAC University located in Dhaka city to get a better understanding between public and private university students internet using behavior. The study results reveal that there are some significant difference between public and private university students in the case of internet using behavior as well as their mentality and tastes. Due to over use of internet technology relationship pattern is changing and it is becoming very much fragile which makes them isolated from the close relationship. In this modern time period people are becoming very busy with their respective jobs and to mitigate their everyday growing demand. As a result, they are becoming dependent on internet technology to maintain relation with relatives and for various purposes. Young generation as an advanced part of technology user is facing more problems for changing relationship in recent years.

Key words: Web technology, relationship pattern, Change in relationship.

I. INTRODUCTION

The demand of modern time is speedy and fastest way of communication but the time period employed for maintaining relationship is very short. As a result, we prefer online based communication instead of face to face communication that saves time and the relationship also. But the drastic change in communication pattern also creates so many problems in our everyday life and this is why it is an important topic of study to know the changing pattern of relationship. Zimuto (2013) mentioned that there is an impact of emerging types of communication medium on Zimbabwean students. The study findings proved that facebook contributes to the dilution of the Zimbabwean culture. Reid (1994) found that the way of internet communication forces users to deconstruct many of the cultural tools and understandings that form the basis of more conventional systems of interaction. Castells (2001) argued that all forms of communication are based on the production and consumption of signs and culture are made up of various communication processes. The new communication system transforms space and time and the fundamental dimensions of human life. The present study is concerned about finding the pattern of internet use among the young people who are mainly youths and the impact of internet use on relationship pattern and to identify the definite pattern of relationship they are actually maintaining.

II. METHOD AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The research followed quantitative method for data collection following purposive sampling techniques. The study areas were selected purposively to show a comparative discussion between public and private university student’s attitude towards internet use and way of maintaining relationship ties. The current study spare among students of Dhaka University and BRAC University located in Dhaka city. The total number of respondents was 120 between the age group of 20-25 representing both male and female although most of them were married specially the women and a semi structured questioner was used for interview. The main research Objectives focuses on – the pattern of internet use by the young people, their perception about the impact of web technology on relationship and changing pattern of relationship among the young people as an impact of web-technology.

III. USAGE OF TECHNOLOGY AND THE CHANGING PATTERNS OF RELATIONSHIP

Time spends for communication and knowledge using Facebook:

This study finds that most of the respondents spend more time in facebook and other social media rather than spending time with family and friends. They like facebook and spend more time in this social communication site. Table 1 shows that among the respondent 43.3% spend less than an hour on Facebook in a day, 6.7% respondent spent 5 hours and more on Facebook daily, 40.8% spends 1-2 hours, 9.2% spends 3-4 hours daily.

Attending social gathering with parents:

Many respondents from both the study sites attend social gathering with parents. Figure 1 shows that among the respondents of Dhaka University 48.3% frequently attend...
social gathering with parents and for BRAC University the number is 53.3%. In the category of rarely attendant the number for Dhaka University respondents is 33.3%, for BRAC University it is 31.7%. 18.3% respondents of Dhaka University rarely attend social gathering with parents and for BRAC University the number is 15%.

Virtual communication as a substitute to physical presence:

Now-a-days on line communication reduces the pressure of physical presence for delivering any message or information to some extent. Among the respondents 15% are strongly agree with it, where 48.3% are agree that virtual communication is a substitute to physical presence. 22.5% are disagreeing with it and other 1.7% is strongly disagreeing with the concept.

Medium of communication with family and friends:

Through the process of time people become busy with their daily activity. For this reason, they cannot manage time to meet personally with family and friends. They find alternative way of communication that is mobile phone, social media etc. The rate of physical visit is decreasing but still present. Among the respondents 67.45% contact with their family and friends using mobile phone, where only 15.9% physically contact with them and another 16.65% use social media.

Relationship change due to over use of internet among youths:

Due to the use of mobile phone and social media for the maintenance of social relationship the previous pattern of relationship is changing and this rate of change is more among young people because they are the most active user of internet technology. 90% respondents of this study think that due to over use of internet among youth the pattern of relationship with family and friends has been changed and only 10% don’t think like that.

Changing patterns and present trends of relationship:

Young people as the most active part of internet mentioned the changing patterns of relationship. Among the respondents 58.3% think that relationship pattern is becoming virtual, 53.3% mentioned about isolation, 40.8% mentioned about lack of co-operation, 32.5% think that it is dependency on others.

Catalyst of changing patterns of relationship

Due to over use of internet mainly the social communication sites the young people have been dramatically change the pattern of communication. 68.3% respondents think that this situation occurs due to misuse of internet. A handsome number mentioned that this is for the lack of recreational activities. 32.5% respondents think that this change in relationship mainly occurs due to breakdown of family relationship and dependency on others. 45.8% think that this is because of lack of recreational activities, 10% mentioned about broken family.

Over use of web technology negatively impact on family bondage:

Over use of web technology has negative impact on family bondage in this regard 15% respondent of Dhaka University gives their consent where 20% respondents of BRAC University are strongly agreed with it. 46.7% respondents of Dhaka University mentioned that they are agree with it and 53.3% respondent from BRAC University mentioned that they are agree with it. Among the respondents of Dhaka University 8.3% are strongly disagreeing with the fact where for BRAC University the number is 6.7%.

IV. WEB TECHNOLOGY AND THE CHANGING PATTERNS OF RELATIONSHIP AMONG THE YOUTHS

Bangladesh society is still a communal society and the history of using internet technology is not so old in this area for this reason the influence of internet technology is not so acute but the scenario is changing rapidly among the young generations. Now-a-days the user of mobile phone and internet technology is increasing rapidly. Instead of analogue mode of communication respondents are using the latest technology for interpersonal communication and these findings are same as the theoretical foundation supports. Most of the respondents prefer on line communication for maintaining personal relationships and on the other hand they are liking attending social gathering with parents rather than spending time in facebook and other social media. This creates a communication gap and people are becoming more introverts at the present time. This clearly represents that most of the respondents prefer internet-based communication as mentioned by Manuel Castells in his network society.

Now-a-days on line communication reduces the pressure of physical presence for delivering any message or information to some extent. Now we can deliver any message without physical presence and this creates on the one hand some flexibility in our life, on the other hand this creates some possible hazards for the users. Due to the use of mobile phone and social media for the maintenance of social relationship the previous pattern of relationship is changing and this rate of change is more among young people because they are the most active user of internet technology.

In the era of internet technology everything is becoming internet based and the part and parcel of our life. Rather the mobile phone company offers different packages of unlimited facebook/ whatsapp as social pack. So, the entire system of socialization is becoming affected by the process and people who are mostly involved with the internet becoming addicted with the social communication media and internet that is producing problematic personality who are mostly unable to communicate in a social world and are giving the secondary group more importance than the primary group such as family relationship. One of the respondents mentioned that

“sometimes for the use of social communication medium young people are becoming unable to communicate in a social space but at the same time it has potential to make someone social”.

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So this is a matter of concern on one side for the modern people and on the other hand it is a blessing. The prominent scholar Manuel Castells of the modern time who mainly think about the emerging issues, critically discuss the emerging culture of real virtuality. Now-a-days young generation as part of the most technologically advanced people is becoming more addicted to the virtual environment rather than the real one.

Nearly hundred percent people among the youth have internet access as shown by the study. But there is a little variation in internet use in terms of male and female users. Male use more than female and they are more active than the females.

Economic background is very important to access the modern amenities of science and technology. Most of the respondents from both the study sites mentioned that the main occupation of their fathers is service and business. There are some other occupations such as teacher, doctor, private job, emigrant and lawyer. In terms of mother’s occupation most of the respondents mentioned that their mother are home maker and the number for Dhaka University respondents is 74% and for BRAC University it is 48.3%. But some mentioned about some other jobs that are teacher, doctor, service and lawyer.

Most of the young people of this study are using internet for 4 years and the number for Dhaka University is 23% and for BRAC University it is 25%. As an instance of increasing use of internet 1.7% respondents from Dhaka University and another 5% respondents from BRAC University are using internet for 10 years and this types of using is increasing day by day mostly among young people.

In terms of daily activity there is a tremendous change because young people are now passing time for more than 5 hours in internet besides other activities and the number for Dhaka University is 16.7% and in BRAC University it is 11.7%. In the time when internet was not available the scenario was different in this way the daily life style pattern is changing as mentioned by Castells (2001). Moreover, he also explains his writing about the changing work environment for the use of internet technology. Now there is no need of fixed office space and this is also true for the students who can get virtual class lecture from reputed universities. Most of the students in this study more or less use internet in daily basis.

There are many sites in the internet and young people visits many sites to know many things and for curiosity. Most of the respondents claim that their favorite site is facebook as Zamuto (2013) explains about the impact of facebook on Zimbabwean students in terms of good effects of facebook and its impact for cultural dilution as mentioned by the respondents of the research. There are good sides and bad sides of facebook use but it totally depends on the user’s choice whether he/she use it for good or for negative purpose.

In the modern times the pattern of relationship is changing very rapidly for various reasons. Among the reasons increasing demand of life, increasing business to fulfill the extra demand of life, communication gap with the close relatives, breakdown of family relationship, separation of parents, lack of proper socialization process etc are very important. Now young people are communicating less with their parents and family but becoming busy with their virtual world of friends.

Moreover, for the blessings of technological development internet technology is very available for everyone. Young people now-a-days becoming addicted with the virtual environment through the help of internet technology. As Castells (2001) explains the characteristics of the virtual communication.

Boyd and Ellison (2007) argued that 90% respondents of their study reported using some form of social networking technology. In terms of use of social networking sites 6.7% respondents of this study use facebook for more than 5 hours. Most of the time they have more friends in social networking sites than in real life. Among the respondents 3.3% have more than 1000 friends in facebook and mostly they communicate with friends through mobile phone or social communication sites. This type of change in way of communication can cause large scale change in social life and other social relationships.

One of the respondents mentioned that in Bangladesh society the rate of relationship change is not so acute because the base of Bangladesh society is still communal but the rate of change is more in western society.

Though Bangladesh society is still based on communal system, the roots of everyone is in village that’s why the whole social system has not changed dramatically. At the same time the rate of divorce, breakup of family relationship and other damage of human relationship is a threat for the social bond that is mentioned by Azim (2003). Young people communicate with their family members through mobile phone but at the same time they increasingly spending more time in social communication sites in search of new friends and a new virtual world where there is no rules or code of conduct and the user is free to do anything. They find peace in the virtual relationship.

As Castells (2001) mentioned that the online communication medium makes people lonely within a sea of so many people. In the age of virtual communication people are becoming more frustrated because the relationship type is so temporary and there is no trust and commitment to continue the relationship forever. Moreover, there is no code of conduct. All of the characteristics of on-line communication on the one hand attracting people to include them in the network and on the other hand make them more fragile in terms of actual social relationship. One of the respondents of case study mentioned that “for the over use of internet basically facebook young people are becoming separate from the actual taste of real-life friendship”. Besides the use of social communication sites most of the respondents frequently attend social gathering with parents this number are 48.3% and 53.3% for Dhaka University and BRAC University respectively. 48.3% respondents think that virtual communication is substitute to physical presence because of communication opportunity over time and space. Among the respondents 90% think that the relationship pattern has changed due to over use of internet among youth. The
distance within relationship is also increasing because of direct communication gap.

Due to the use of internet technology the relationship pattern has been changed and 53.3% respondents mark isolation as a pattern of changing relationship. Moreover, there are other causes that are lack of cooperation, virtual relation, dependency on others etc. In the modern world everyone is busy with themselves no one has time to cooperate with others. In most of the cases young people misuse the internet and for lack of recreational activities they are becoming more dependent on virtual relationship. In the whole survey only 1.7% respondents claim that they do not have strong family bondage due to internal family problem.

As Azim (2003) mentioned that overuse of internet technology has negative effect on family bondage, most of the respondents 46.7% and 53.3% from Dhaka University and BRAC University respectively think that over use of internet technology has negative effect on family bondage, where 8.3% and 6.7% from Dhaka University and BRAC University are strongly disagree with the concept.

Love relationship developed by facebook is more prone to breakup is an important issue in the age of internet communication because for the blessing of internet technology the formation of love relationship and the matter of breakup is so frequently occurring. Now love making and breakup of love relationship is very frequent because there is no depth, trust within relationship. The study reveals that 45% respondents are agreeing with the concept that love relationship made by facebook is more prone to breakup. This is an important evidence of the breakdown of relationship pattern. The fact is, 83.3% and 88.3% respondents from Dhaka University and BRAC University respectively think that there is influence of facebook in changing love relationship. One of the respondents of case study mentioned that the face of love relationship was present in society in the previous eras but in the age of science and internet technology the nature of love has changed.

In the age of on-line communication and communication through social media young people are becoming attached with unknown people due to various reasons such as departmental purpose, for making fun, to know more people, to extend network etc. Though they are communicating through on line but still most of them think that on-line communication is not a substitute of face to face relationship. This illustrates that face to face or direct communication is still important but the feature is not so common in terms of the change in western society. There the change is so acute. But still some respondents think that on-line communication is substitute to face to face communication due to better communication opportunity and distance among relatives.

Although on line relationship has some opportunity of communication but it is deteriorating the previous intimate relationship among people. Among the respondents 80% from Dhaka University and 86.7% from BRAC University think that on-line relationship is deteriorating the previous face to face relationship. Moreover, due to the use of facebook the harassment of women is also increasing that is photo, fake id and video harassment. Above all the depth of human relationship is decreasing due to virtual communication. Among the respondents 88.3% from BRAC University and 83.3% from Dhaka University think that the depth of human relationship is decreasing due to the use of virtual communication.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Society is not static it is dynamic, change is absolute stability is related this important argument given by Karl Marx. Through the process of time for various inventions, technological development, changing lifestyle pattern, change of mentality society is always changing. Moreover, sometimes demand is the mother of invention. To keep pace with the modern time always we have to be so speedy otherwise survival with time is not possible. For this reason, the people of the modern world invent the speediest way of communication that is mainly based on internet technology. For the blessings of internet technology, the modern life becomes more smooth, comfortable and luxurious. Everything has a positive side and negative side and it mainly depends on the user whether he/she should take the positive side or negative side. Works in such an environment where it is not necessary to know everyone is an important characteristic of internet communication. On the one hand it creates communication opportunity on the other hand is posing a threat in the maintenance of the previous social relationship among people. Though young people are the main user of the technology, the whole system of interpersonal relationship, family relationship is changing in the present. As Bangladesh society is still a traditional society, the change is not so acute like the western society.

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