

SMARTPHONES ARE DESTROYING THE ESSENCE OF CHILDHOOD: AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Smartphones have become an E-Toy for kids. It has graduated from the basic need of making a call to an entertainment device. Now it is not just used as a device for communication but also used as a device to play games, click pictures, listen to music, browse the internet, chat instantly with friends and family members, to pay bills, to create social network etc. There is no other gadget which is as widely adopted and spread across the planet as smartphones. Smartphones have emerged as a substitute to so many gadgets like Camera, Video Games, Remote, TV, Computer, Watch etc. All these have been replaced by a Smartphone. Especially children from 0 to 10 years of age are getting highly addicted to smart phones. But the gadget comes with so many side effects. The paper describes the major adverse circumstances of smart phones on children. It describes how kids are getting mature too soon. The paper also discusses the various social, emotional as well as neurological disorders in the children due to prolonged use of smartphones.

KEYWORDS: Smartphones, Addiction, Side Effects, Monophobia, ADHD Behavior.

Introduction

Now a days, Smart phones can be seen as a substitute to parenting. Children these days are dependent more on their smartphone than on their parents. Smart phones have a magical value in the eyes of children. Even children who have not mastered reading skills can operate a smartphone through logos and pictures (Stephane Chaudron) From morning alarms to evening engagements, they feed everything on their smartphone. Kids are not required to move out of their homes to meet their friends as they can chat with each other online through the various Apps. Children do not prefer to go to playgrounds and play outdoor games as they can play 3D HD games sitting in their room. Gone are the days when kids wanted their parents to recite some story or sing a lullaby to sleep well, as they choose to watch Youtube videos to serve the purpose. Kids use smartphone to play games, watch videos, shopping, chatting with friends. Some studies show that children eat food only when they are playing games or watching videos in smartphone. This is a complete digital generation. However, extended exposure to internet enabled smartphones comes with many disadvantages. It deteriorates the mental, emotional, physical as well as neurological development of children. It affects the overall development of brain and body. After spending hours glued to smartphones, children may feel tingling in their fingers and losses dexterity (Graeme Paton). Smartphone are ruling our lives, relationships, values and norms (Flanagan J). A research study of 200 adolescents shows that those who are using smartphones for long hours suffers from more questionable behavior, bodily symptoms, attention deficit, aggressive behavior, and these users suffered from severe psychopathologies (Brauser D). Mobile phone users often complaint about headache, hearing loss, memory loss, fatigue and such health issues (Khan MM). Some researcher's claims that over dependency on smartphones may lead to weak interpersonal skills and in some cases it may cause stress, anxiety, insomnia, delinquency etc. (Ira. S.). When children are glued to smartphones before going to bed, it become difficult for them to fall asleep. The rays emitted from the screens of smartphones disturbs the sleep-wake

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