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YOUNG, WIRED, AND STRESSED: SMARTPHONE ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES AMONG INDIAN STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The widespread adoption of smartphones has significantly altered students' lifestyles, facilitating continuous connectivity and access to digital resources. However, increasing dependence on smartphones has prompted critical inquiries into their psychological effects. This study examined the relationships between smartphone addiction, perceived stress, and depression among students aged 15-28 years across five Indian states. Data were collected using convenience and snowball sampling methods from students (n=396) studying and residing in the states of Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Rajasthanvia Google Forms. Correlational analyses indicated weak yet significant positive associations between smartphone addiction and both perceived stress and depression. Although no significant differences in smartphone addiction were observed based on age or gender, females reported significantly higher levels of depression. These findings highlight the growing needfor digital well-being interventions, and call for further exploration of the psychosocial dynamics of smartphone use among students.

KEYWORDS: *Age And Gender Differences, Depression, Digital Well-Being, Indian Students, Perceived Stress, Smartphone Addiction.*

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Conflict of Interest

The authors have explicitly stated that this paper does not have any conflicts of interest.

Author Contributions

AGS (first author) helped conceptualize the study, obtained the necessary permissions for the use of standardized scales and measures, conducted data collection, and drafted the manuscript. JF contributed to the conceptualization and design of the study, performed the statistical analyses, and assisted in revising and refining the manuscript. Both authors critically reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript for submission.

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