

**A STUDY ON INTERNET ADDICTION AMONG STUDENTS IN NMSM
GOVERNMENT COLLEGE, KALPETTA, WAYANAD**

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The outbreak of corona virus in 2019 (COVID-19) has negatively impacted all members of society. With the increasing number of cases reported, physical distancing became compulsory in several nations, including India, as WHO instructed. The policy of physical distancing, which came into existence with the outbreak of this disease, generated a demand among students worldwide to remain at home and learn through online platforms. This trend caused specific crucial changes in the social life of students along with certain behavioural changes. Accelerated usage of the internet was one among such transitions as they did not have opportunities to meet friends or socialize, and all the learning programs were delivered online. Restricted social relations with their peers contributed to loneliness and an inflated chance of weak mental health among students such as depression, anxiety, traumatic experiences, and sleep disorder among adolescents. In addition, there were restrictions on recreational activities. Hence, since students were advised to stay at home for an extended period, the internet became the only source of entertainment. Apart from this, the need to adjust swiftly to the novel COVID-19 rules and regulations places an added psychological burden on college students. Professionals asserted that executing the abrupt virtual learning techniques can reduce study motivation, delinquency in daily activities, and an increase in dropouts.

Although Internet has been one of the vital tools of current life, virtual learning methods caused an escalation in the use of internet among college students since they were expected to spend more time online in order to fulfil the academic requirements during the outbreak of COVID 19. It results in a shift in mood, incapacity to limit the amount of time spent on the Internet, symptoms of withdrawal when not engaged, a deteriorating social life, and damaging employment or educational consequences (Mondal & Kumar, 2018).

Aim of the Study

As internet addiction is one of the significant issues that act as a hindrance for academic success among students (Shanker et. al, 2018), Jeevani Centre for Students Well-being in NMSM College, Kalpetta, found it necessary to study the pattern of Internet usage among the students in the college to gain a holistic perspective as per the counselling cases and its

outreach programs among students. With this aim in mind, the present study has been undertaken to take a close look at this issue.

Methodology:

A descriptive study has conducted with help of quantitative research methodology tools.

Sample

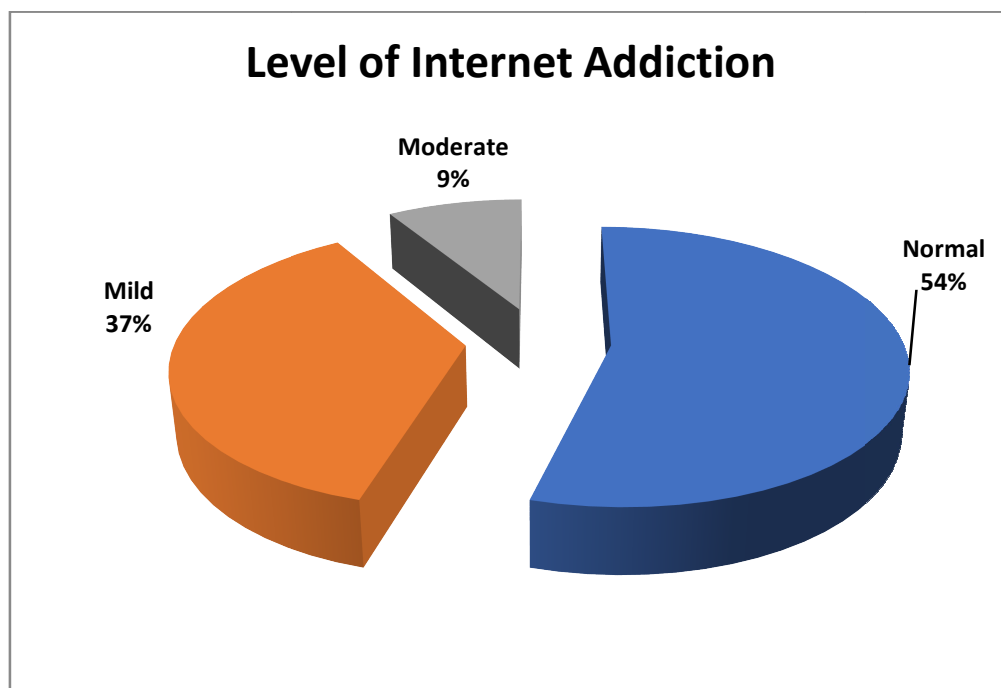
A total of 204 college students from all departments of NMSM Government College, Kalpetta were selected through random sampling. The Google sheet which contains questions of Internet Addiction Scale was circulated among students.

Tools Used

Internet Addiction Scale: The IAS is a 20-item scale that measures the presence and severity of Internet dependency. This questionnaire is scored on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 to 5. The marking for this questionnaire ranges from 20 to 100, the higher the marks, the greater the dependence on the Internet

Results and Analysis

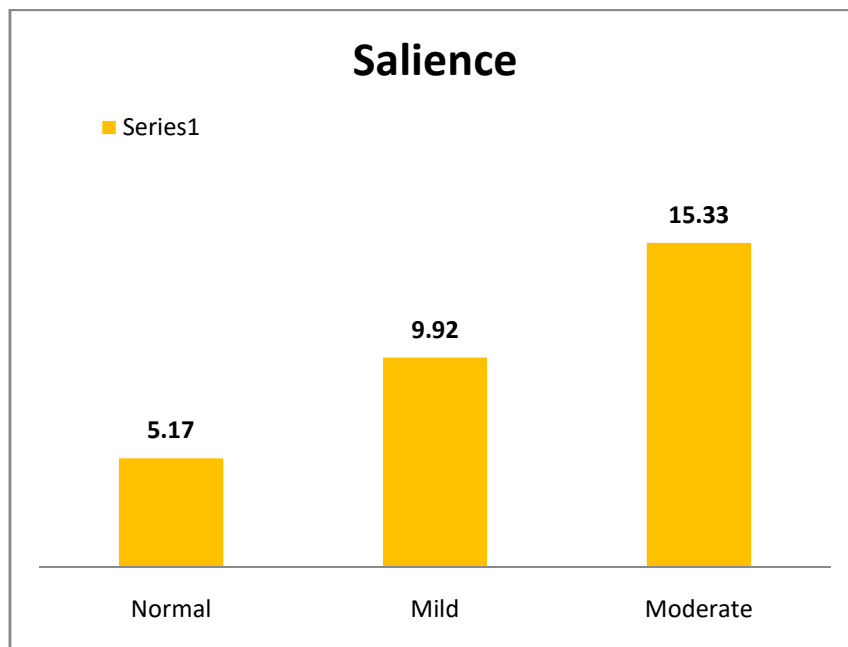
Figure 1



As it is evident from the diagram, more than half of the participants do not exhibit any internet addiction as they fall into the normal category. However, 37 per cent of the students

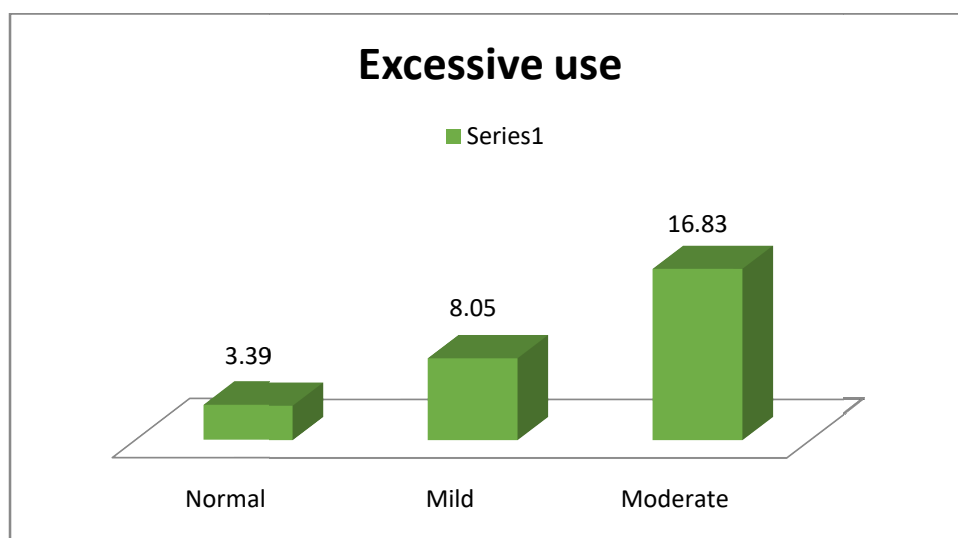
who took part in the survey showed mild internet addiction while 9 per cent reported moderate level of internet addiction. Apart from this, no cases of severe addiction were reported.

Figure 2



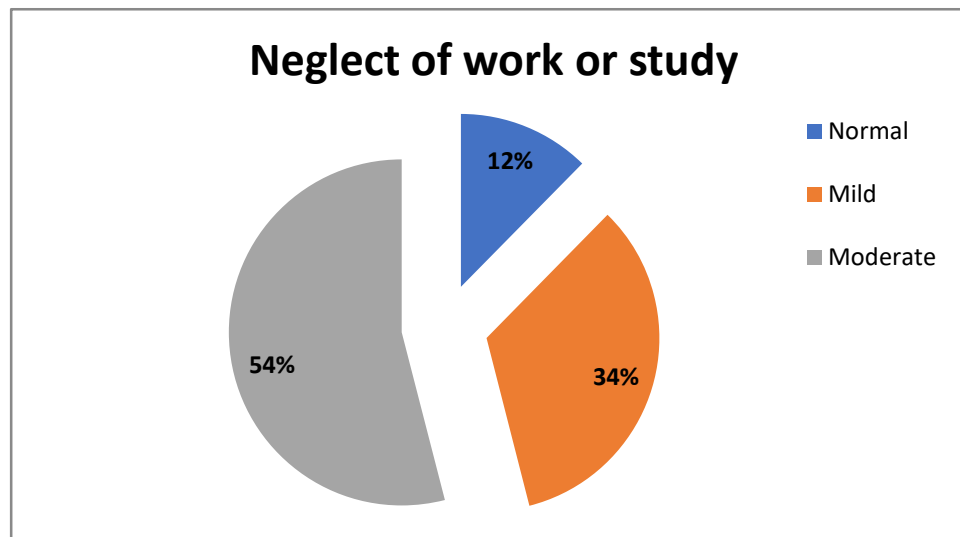
It is apparent from the bar chart that among the sample who reported normal level of internet addiction, the average range of salience was 5.17 while it was 9.92 among students who exhibited mild internet addiction. However, 15.33 was the average level of salience among the respondents who reported moderate internet addiction.

Figure 3



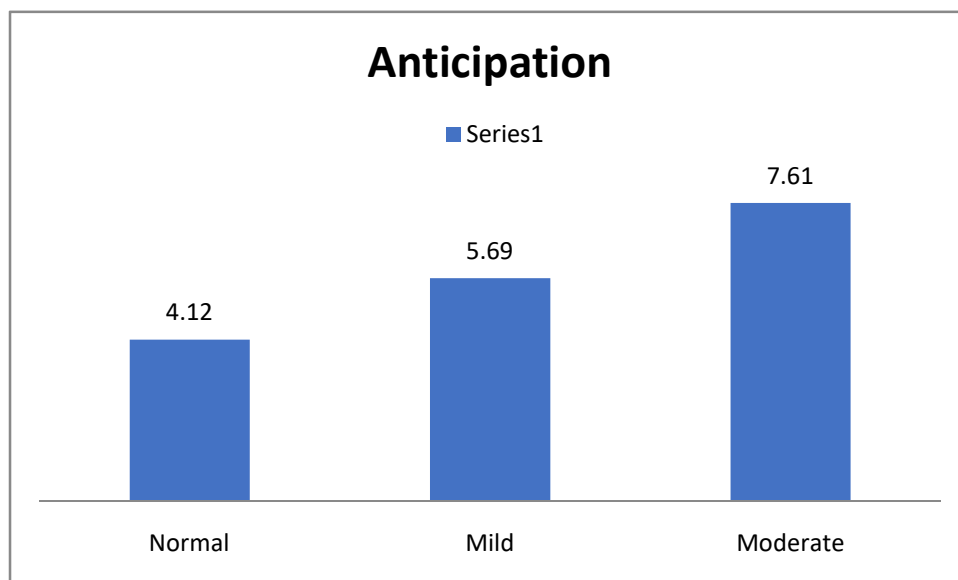
At a glance, it is tangible from the diagram that, 3.39 was the average ‘excessive use’ of internet among the participants who exhibited normal internet usage. However, it was 8.05 among the mild internet addicts and 16.3 among moderate internet addicts.

Figure 4



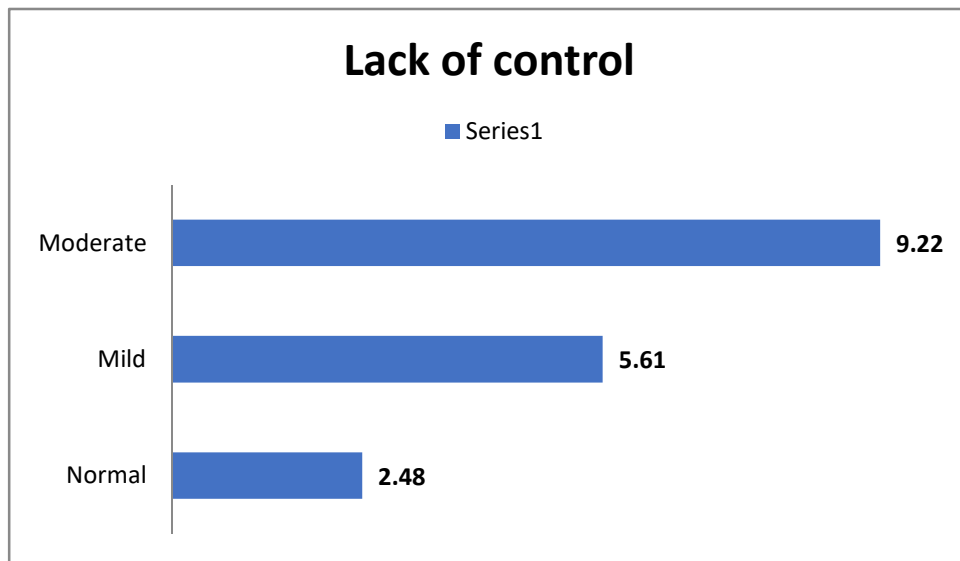
As is illustrated in the diagram, the average level neglect of work or study was 2.4, 6.6 and 10.6 among participants who reported normal, mild, and moderate internet addiction.

Figure 5



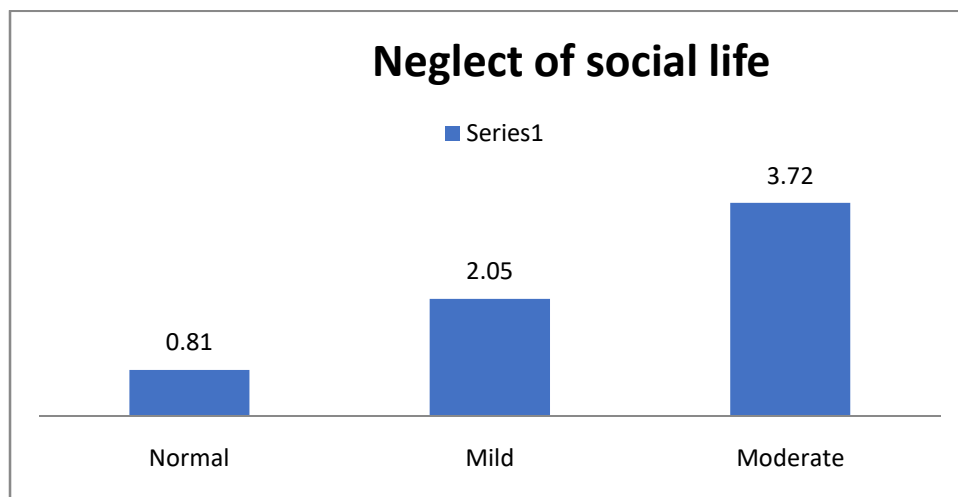
As the diagram shows, the average level of anticipation was the highest among participants who reported moderate internet addiction as against normal internet users, which was 4.12. However, 5.69 was the average anticipation among mild internet addicts.

Figure 6



As is depicted in the bar chart, 9.22 was the average 'lack of control' among moderate internet addicts while it was 5.61 among participants who reported mild internet addicts. Meanwhile, it was 2.48 among participants who were normal in their level of internet usage.

Figure 7



As can be seen from the diagram that 0.81, 2.05 and 3.72 were the average level of 'neglect of social life' among participants who reported normal, mild and moderate internet addiction.

Discussion

Due to the Covid-19 outbreak resulted quarantine policies and restrictions in social gatherings, people depended more on internet and mobile phones as part of work, study and entertainments globally. The ripple effect of these control over social life drastically

influenced the life of students especially in the case of college students. As a rural district of Kerala, students in Wayanad engaged in to agrarian and allied activities along with parents during this period. Even though internet usage among college students increased dramatically due to certain social changes in the recent past, no severe cases of internet addiction was reported in the survey.

Average salience was high among moderate users, which is a clear indication that the respondents in this category likely feels preoccupied with the Internet, hides the behaviour from others, and may display a loss of interest in other activities and/or relationships only to prefer more solitary time online. It also suggest that the moderate respondents uses the Internet as a form of mental escape from distributing thoughts and may feel that life without the Internet would be boring, empty, or joyless.

High ratings for Excessive Use-related items among moderate internet addicts indicate that the respondents engage in excessive online behaviour and compulsive usage, and are intermittently unable to control time online that he or she hides from others. High ratings also suggest that the respondent is most likely to become depressed, panicked, or angry if forced to go without the Internet for an extended length of time.

High ratings for Neglect Work-related exam items among moderate internet addicts indicate the respondents may view the Internet as a necessary appliance akin to the television, microwave, or telephone. Academic performance and productivity are most likely compromised due to the amount of time spent online and the respondent may become defensive or secretive about the time spent online.

High ratings for Anticipation-related items indicate that the respondent most likely thinks about being online when not at the computer and feels compelled to use the Internet when offline. High ratings for Lack of Control-related items indicate that the respondent has trouble managing his or her online time, frequently stays online longer than intended, and others may complain about the amount of time he or she spends online.

Ratings on Neglect of Social Life-items were low among students in NMSM Government college among mild and moderate internet addicts. This is an evident depiction of the social life of students in rural areas of Wayand. However, there are cases where respondents likely utilizes online relationships to cope with situational problems and/or to reduce mental tension and stress and frequently form new relationships with fellow online users and uses the Internet to establish social connections that may be missing in his or her life

Conclusion

Internet was formed to improve the lives of people. Although it contributed to several constructive changes, a drastic increase in the usage of internet among students in recent years due to certain social changes has led to pathological usage, known as internet addiction. This form of addiction is different from other drug associated addictions as it involves frequent and prolonged human machine interactions, which has the potential to affect the normal functioning of any individual. It was found that internet addiction can affect the psychological and mental health of people in general and may reflect in the form of loss of social skills, disturbances in sleep patterns, obsessions to social networking sites and other websites. Youth is more vulnerable to internet addiction than other age groups although it is expected to be the most productive age in the lifespan of an individual (Kuss et al., 2013). Outbreak of Covid 19 accelerated the use of internet and it affected the youth in many ways.

Even though nearly half of the participants reported a normal usage of internet, mild and moderate cases of internet addiction was reported among other half. However, no severe internet addiction responses were reported. The social and cultural background of children influenced these responses, as neglect of social life wasn't a major issue for even the moderate internet addicts. However, students in college used internet at the cost of their academic performance. Hence, further initiatives are required to enable vulnerable students to overcome their internet addiction.

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