

**A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF
SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM ON COLLEGE
STUDENTS THROUGH INSTAGRAM WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO KOCHI**



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MARCH 2022



**A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM
ON COLLEGE STUDENTS THROUGH INSTAGRAM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO KOCHI**

Thesis submitted to St. Teresa's College (Autonomous), Ernakulam in *fulfillment of the require
ments for the award of the degree of **Master of Arts in Sociology***

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CERTIFICATE

I certify that the thesis entitled "A Sociological Study on the Impact of Surveillance Capitalism on College Students through Instagram with special reference to Kochi" is a record of bonafide research work carried out by Hesha Anjum Yousaf, under my guidance and supervision. The thesis is worth submitting in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology.



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DECLARATION

I, Hesha Anjum Yousaf. hereby declare that the thesis entitled "A Sociological Study on the Impact of Surveillance Capitalism on College Students through Instagram with special reference to Kochi" is a Bonafede record of independent research work carried out by me under the supervision and guidance of Smt. Dora Dominic. I further declare that this thesis has not been previously submitted for the award of any degree, diploma associateship or other similar title.

Ernakulam
March 2022



Hesha Anjum Yousaf

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Ernakulam

Hesha Anjum Yousaf

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CHAPTER – 1
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER -1

INTRODUCTION

Whenever you increase surveillance of individuals, you must simultaneously increase surveillance of government and corporations.

- Yuval Noah Harari

The most characteristic feature that distinguishes our times may be dedicated towards technological innovation and it's increasing saturation in society and every-day life. If one were to observe the course of human history, it would be undeniable that technology was never an end to itself. It was and always will be a mean to ideological and economic imperatives. So, even though technology is neutral by nature and helps weave the fabric of society with opportunities once unimaginable, it poses threats. Veiled threats. These threats are especially to be addressed in world that pushes itself to technological digitalization in the name of development and progress.

In an attempt to contribute to the narratives that overhaul people's rightful use of the internet and their digital footprint, this paper endeavors the impact surveillance capitalism holds on young adults in Kochi.

1. WHAT IS SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM

The neology of the term 'Surveillance Capitalism' dates only back to 2014, when Shoshanna Zuboff, American author, Harvard professor, social psychologist, philosopher, and scholar, first delved into this new economic order in her essay, "A Digital Declaration" published in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung.

A complete critique of her grounded theory and its consequences for twenty-first century technology and society has been thoroughly elucidated in her work *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*, 2019.

Surveillance Capitalism has been attributed eight definitions as follows:

1. A new economic order that claims human experience as free raw material for hidden commercial practices of extraction, prediction, and sales; 2. A parasitic economic logic in which the production of goods and services is subordinated to a new global architecture of behavioral modification; 3. A rogue mutation of capitalism marked by concentration of wealth, knowledge

and power unprecedented in human history; 4. The foundational framework of a surveillance economy; 5. As significant a threat to human nature in the 21st century as industrial capitalism was to the natural world in the nineteenth and twentieth; 6. The origin of a new instrumentarian power that asserts dominance over society and presents startling challenges to market democracy; 7. A movement that aims to impose a new collective order based on total certainty; 8. An expropriation of critical human rights that is best understood as a coup from above : an overthrow of the people's sovereignty. (Zuboff, 2019)

By these definitions it is congruent to call surveillance capitalism as an unprecedented and unique form of economic order that unilaterally claims human experiences as free raw material for translation into behavioural data. The data collected are not just used for service improvement but the rest of the data or behavioural surplus are fed into advanced manufacturing processes known as machine intelligence that fabricate prediction products. These prediction products anticipate your actions thereby creating a marketplace that trades on future behaviour. The 20th century saw the rise of Industrial Capitalism whose 'original sin' was the accumulation of capital from labour. At its core it revives Marx's old image of capitalism but instead of feeding on labour, it feeds on every aspect of human experience. Thus, Surveillance Capitalism characterizes a rather post Marxist critique.

Technological development and ever competitive market dynamics have driven surveillance capitalists to acquire ever more predictive sources of behavioural surplus with respect to things as personal as emotions, feelings, or personalities. This is concerning as competitive pressures have led automated machine processes to nudge, coax and herd behaviour purely towards profitable outcomes.

1.2 THE ORIGIN OF SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM

The grounded theory of Surveillance Capitalism as described in *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* traces the roots to this phenomenon back to the warehouses of user data stored (rather uselessly) in Google during the early 2000s. As the company tried to boost its ad relevance by relying and repurposing its growing cache of behavioral data, this digital data became one of the most priced commodities – a tipping point where Google's revenue increased by about 4000%. Surveillance capitalism originates in this act of digital dispossession, operationalized in the rendition of human experience as behavioral data. Thus, as articulated by Zuboff, google launched an unprecedented market operation into unmapped spaces on the internet akin to an invasive species in a new landscape.

Zuboff (2019) found that the second modernity's individualism and neoliberalism was the key moment in history triggering a socio-political turmoil which allowed surveillance capitalists to exploit the vulnerabilities of the modern citizens. It did so by establishing close ties with the government of the US, lobbying congress and creating relationships with US presidents to protect it's ways from the federal regulations of the state.

However, it is concerning to note that surveillance capitalism has become the default business model for most internet-based businesses. Seeping from big companies like Google, Meta or Amazon, it now extends to finance, retail, insurance, etc and other offline spaces like a conversation with family members.

1.3 THE WORKINGS OF SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM

The conceptual roots of the modification of behaviour as seen in surveillance capitalism takes root from the 70s, when science helped manipulate behaviour during the Cold War as ideological anxieties of communism spurred from the East. However, by 1971, public concerns were raised which allowed the Constitutional Rights Subcommittee to address public concerns to protect privacy and independent thought.

The surveillance economy that we all reside in began with an extraction architecture. Here, the user's behavioural data was collected systematically and unethically by corporations as they saturated into the lives of people through their internet services, smart phones, facial recognition technologies, etc. Advanced technology, better understanding of biology, psychology, etc. led to the accumulation of more data than ever before to a point where machine intelligence was able to identify complex things like human emotions before people recognized this themselves. It then, moved towards an execution architecture or 'economy of action' which directly aimed at individual autonomy by systematically replacing self-determining action with hidden operations designed to shape behaviours of people. This directly impacted people's choices and intervened people's life. This way, by shaping the behavior of people, it guaranteed outcomes allowing profit-oriented corporations to make the future for the sake of predicting it. In this second imperative So, corporations now didn't work towards improving their performance but instead tried to guarantee its outcomes or people's behavior. In other words, like industrial capitalism which focused on the intensification of means of production, surveillance capitalists are locked in the cycle of continuous intensification of means of behavioural modification.

Zuboff (2019) also introduces the concept of "uncontract" which is a contractual mode of agreement that relies purely on automation and not human relationship spearheaded by Google's

Chief Economist Hal Varian as surveillance capitalism seeps into private lives through ubiquitous computing, acts of rendition and behavioural modification. She emphasises “economies of Depth” while focusing on the concept of rendition where everyday objects like ovens, toothbrush, or lightbulbs on the pretext of being “smart” exert power by turning in their profitable data from these. She claims that the supposedly anonymous metadata will be cross- references with public information like zip code or birthdays and thereby de-anonymise it. These economies of depth also follow personalisation which on the forefront appear as a boon but they only secure streams of behavioural data surplus.

These economies of action that nudge and coax building off of ubiquitous computing first begins by tuning. They occur through messages or websites that are specifically designed to elicit patterns of behaviour. Tuning is followed by herding through controlling the environment and finally through conditioning where a stimulus initiates desired behaviour.

1.4 SOCIAL REPURCUSSIONS OF SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM

Zuboff (2019) arrogates that the colonisation of the 18th and 19th century and the expansion of Surveillance Capitalism have similar conquest patterns to our lives and personal data i.e. the invention of legal rationale to justify an invasion of territory, declarations of claims to said territory, and the founding of a new town to legitimate the invasion and conquest.

These declarations of conquest that claims lived experience as raw materials free to be taken, translating then to behavioural data, owning this data, unilaterally deciding it’s interpretation, and how to use the knowledge gained from this interpretation and finally the taking the steps required to maintain it’s survival all create unbalanced concentration of knowledge and power in society. This is by far the most alarming consequence as only certain individuals know bodies of information, authorise its access and determines who knows what. And so, it is congruent to say that the 21st century is faced with an unprecedented and unimaginable division of power and knowledge which society at present has no laws or means to stop.

1.5. UNDERSTANDING THE INSTRUMENTARIAN POWER OF SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM

The historical forces of totalitarianism and radical behaviourism has contributed to the construction of surveillance capitalism whose ideological power has enforced a certain kind of instrumentarianism. This is a form of control slightly different from totalitarianism. Here, the mode of control is behavioural modification unlike that of violence or coercion used by totalitarianism.

Instrumentarianism relies on the “Big Other” to monitors and datifies every individual’s behaviour, where Big Other used B.F Skinner’s analogy of radical behaviourism. Its control is masked and not recognised readily as control is subtle, omnipresent and not violent on the surface.

It is characteristic of surveillance capitalism to feign the mask of progress and lead it’s ulterior motifs without being questioned unlike new laws and regulations that come to being which people can readily critique with time. Another difference to be noted here is also that unlike laws, policies or regulations that are put into effect after its announcement, surveillance capitalism always passes it’s action first and then feigns it’s mask of progress.

CHAPTER – 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

CHAPTER – 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

A literature review is a “critical analysis of a segment of a published body of knowledge through summary, classification, and comparison of prior research studies, reviews of literature, and theoretical articles” (University of Wisconsin Writing Centre, 2020). By doing a literature review, the researcher gets more ideas about various aspects of their study.

The canonical text on surveillance capitalism was released very recently in 2019 by Prof. Shoshanna Zuboff titled “The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power.” The work details the development of digital companies and proves how their business models represent a new form of capitalism that trades in human futures. It is a qualitative work paying close attention to interviews, speeches, conferences, company programs and policies etc. to understand the new capitalist orders’ infrastructure. The book is detailed in three parts comprehending the foundations, advances, and the instrumentarian power of surveillance capitalism.

Cinnamon, Jonathan (2017) in their paper “Social Injustice in Surveillance Capitalism” shows how the practises of surveillance capitalism threatens social justice and social participation in the parity of social life, based on Nancy Frazer’s theory of ‘abnormal justice’ to show how accumulation of personal data of people by corporations is a form of economic injustice of maldistribution. The paper addresses the socio-cultural misrecognition, political misrepresentation, etc caused by algorithmically processed data subjected to categorization. It continues by pointing out the need for conceptual development of the threats of dataveillance as well as empirical research that exposes further examples of unjust data practices occurring within the broader assemblage of state and corporate surveillance. The paper also calls for research that would seek to ascertain the conditions necessary to recast personal data as a force for advancing social equality rather than injustice.

Graham, Stephen; Wood, David (2003) in their paper “Digitizing Surveillance: Categorization, Space, Inequality critiques surveillance and society and its Social Implications” through the emerging surveillance practices surrounding surround digital techniques and

technologies. It comprehensively explores the nature of digital surveillance, political economies of cities and urban societies and digitisation within the context of privatization, liberalization and social polarization, and the policy and research implications due to the spread of digital surveillance.

Nurik, Chloe Lynn (2022) in their paper “Facebook and the Surveillance Assemblage: Policing Black Lives Matter Activists & Suppressing Dissent” uses empirical data address the role of third parties and provide insights into the opaque of surveillance on social media by intertwining private policing, surveillance studies, and social movements literature. It outlines the “social media surveillance assemblage”(Trottier 2011:63) on Facebook, including its deployment against social activists.

Kim, Mun-Cho (2004) in their work “Surveillance Technology, Privacy and Social Control” explains how through South Korea’s digital National Identification Card has led to threaten the increasing dependence on sophisticated, more unobtrusive, and thus less illegal surveillance technologies which ultimately chart the classical perspectives from the shift of control from overt and abusive to covert and pseudo self-controlling. It thus, describes how technologies alter the social order.

Andrew, J., Baker, M. (2021) “The General Data Protection Regulation in the Age of Surveillance Capitalism” in their book studies the social costs that accompany the collection of Big Data as it records and analyses clicks, comments, transactions, and physical movements. This study tries to delineate the issues that come with and surveillance by presenting them as in tension with one another. By considering the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) it postulates that controlling Big Data could create more trade-off of risks than an overall improvement in data protection. Showing that the GDPR is a new ‘gold standard’ of cyber-laws the work advocates anonymization and pseudonymization, while representing effective counter measures to privacy concerns, also incentivize the use, collection, and trade of behavioral and other forms of de-identified data. It inturn considers the legal status of ownerless forms of data which show data protection techniques anonymization and pseudonymization raising concerns over who owns behavioral data, and its usage in the large-scale modification choices made both on and offline by people.

Linder, Thomas (2019) work titled “Surveillance Capitalism and Platform Policing: The Surveillant Assemblage-as-a-Service” is based on empirical research on training webinars, interviews, and promotional material from Vigilant Solutions. The work investigates the

surveillance regime enabled by platform policing such as the implementation of cloud-based platforms which are designed and run by private corporations providing mass surveillance-driven simulations for a range of police operations like predictive policing, targeted surveillance, and tactical and strategic governance, etc. It builds on Amoore's (2016) work on "cloud geographies," to argue that the platform model embodied by Vigilant Solutions involves multivalent processes of de- and reterritorialization where new technological and datalogical spaces are formed and these erode older societal boundaries of private, public, and state. It is very specific that the Vigilant Solutions leverages its multi-sided platform business model through the deterritorializing, cloud-based concatenations of surveillant technologies. The paper moves on to argue that the resultant reterritorialized cloud space, which is accessible through its Vigilant Investigative Centre (VIC) platform incidentally fuses mass surveillance data from diverse private, public, and state sources in a simulated geography. Moving on, the VIC furnishes to law enforcement an array of data analytics which will exploits this cloud geography to enable a boundary-crossing surveillance regime of association analysis and proximal suspicion.

Sangiovanni, Andrea (2019) in their work "Democratic Control of Information in the Age of Surveillance Capitalism" uses Carol Gould's article and accesses three claims she makes namely (1) democratic control is required by the all-affected principle; (2) democratic control is a means of ensuring that surveillance corporations and governments track public, rather than merely private, interests; and (3) democratic control is constitutive of freedom as self-development and self-transformation. The article is an argument against the insufficiency of informed consent in surveillance capitalism

Nikhil Venkatesh; (2021) paper "Surveillance Capitalism: a Marx-inspired account Philosophy" analyses the relations between industrial capitalists and workers who are closely analogous to the relations between surveillance capitalists and users. By describing the three problematic aspects of industrial capitalism in Marxist philosophy that is – alienation, exploitation and accumulation, the paper shows its newform incarnation in surveillance capitalism drawing from Zuboff's work to make these parallels but only differs over the nature of the exchange between users and surveillance capitalists. Zuboff akin surveillance capitalism to robbery or the gathering of raw materials which on the Marx-inspired account may qualify as a voluntary sale. By picking up this difference the paper shows the important implications for the question on how to resist surveillance capitalism.

Gidaris, Constantine (2019) paper "Surveillance Capitalism, Datafication, and Unwaged Labour: The Rise of Wearable Fitness Devices and Interactive Life Insurance" explores the

relationship that interactive life insurance companies and their policyholders share with each other. It understands how wearable fitness devices are deployed by these companies as data-generating surveillance technologies and their agenda isn't necessarily the personal health of their clients. The work expands on the framework of "surveillance capitalism" (Zuboff 2015) and argues that while the notion of self-care generally associated with wearable fitness devices is underpinned by neoliberal constructs its incentivization of interactive life insurance programs works to stop the immense value placed on information capital. This paper also pays heed to the legal loopholes that enables the harvesting of sensitive health and fitness from these devices. It suggests that the push toward fitness trackers has little to do with any real concerns for the health and fitness of consumers and policyholders. The paper ends with the consideration of different forms of unwaged labour in the relationship between policyholders and interactive life insurance programs contending that policyholders do not recognise the free and immaterial labour that goes into sustaining the data-based business model which interactive life insurance companies and social media platforms use and rely on for profit. The work also shows that by doing so they relinquish power and control over the data they work to produce only so the collected data is used against the clients.

Turner, Fred (2018) work "The arts at Facebook: An aesthetic infrastructure for Surveillance Capitalism" discusses how Facebook has maintained two internal organizations to commission and create artworks for Facebook offices around the globe from the last decade. The paper maps these enterprises, organizational practices, as well as the aesthetics promoted by them. It then builds on recent work in the critical sociology of capitalism to argue two cases such that: one, the ways Facebook works with the arts marks a radical departure from traditional, industrial-era corporate collecting practices; and two, that Facebook's arts initiatives mirror and help legitimate profit-seeking techniques particular to social media. In conclusion, these features give a glimpse of the ways in which surveillance-based for-profit media such as Facebook are create new relationships between the arts, the corporation, and the people.

Paul-Olivier Dehaye;Joel Reardon; (2020) in their work " Proximity Tracing in an Ecosystem of Surveillance Capitalism " traces the apps that propose as an aid to help deal the COVID-19 crisis when in actuality some of those apps leverage attenuation of Bluetooth beacons from mobile devices in order to build a record of proximate encounters between a pair of device owners. These underlying protocols suffer from false positive and re-identification attacks. The paper evidences that attacker's difficulty in mounting such attacks are overestimated and that an attacker leveraging a moderately successful app or SDK with Bluetooth can access, eavesdrop and

interfere with these proximity tracing systems at no hardware cost while performing these attacks against users who do not have this app or SDK installed. It cites concrete examples of actors who would be in a good position to execute such attacks and presents a novel attack called biosurveillance attack, where the attacker monitors the exposure risk of a smartphone user who installs their app or SDK but does not use any contact tracing system and may falsely believe they have opted out of the system. With the help of traffic auditing by using an instrumented testbed the paper characterises precisely the behaviour of one such SDK that we found in a handful of apps—but installed on more than one hundred million mobile devices. These behaviours on the surface seem indistinguishable from a re-identification or biosurveillance attack but are capable of executing a false positive attack with minimal effort. The discussions continue on how easily an attacker could acquire a position conducive to such attacks, by leveraging the lax logic for granting permissions to apps in the Android framework that is any app with some geolocation permission could acquire the necessary Bluetooth permission through an upgrade, without any additional user prompt. The paper concludes by understanding the motifs behind these attacks.

Holloway, Donell (2019) in their work “Surveillance capitalism and children’s data: the Internet of toys and things for children” discusses the positioning of children both as objects of economic activity as and subjects of market relations under the new order of surveillance capitalism. It brieds at the history of children’s engagement with the market economy through their engagement in the labour force during industrial revolution times and their disappearance from direct economic activity during the Romantic Movement. It then traces their emergence as both data sources and data consumers within the new big data economy. The case argued here since the late 19th and early 20th centuries due to labour law reforms children weren’t part of the force but now their activities are of significant economic value with the emergence of Internet-connected toys and as theysignificantly amplify children’s position as data sources under surveillance capitalism.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present research draws on the conceptual framework of theories such as Weber's 'Economic Orientation', Knowledge and Power by Foucault, Network Society by Castells and Post-Marxism.

ECONOMIC ORIENTATION

Zuboff (2019) has clearly distinguished between technology and Surveillance Capitalism in an effort to erase the latter. She demarks the confusion it has held onto commoners and the guise put forth by Surveillance Capitalists in order to shield and proliferate the impudent new economic order. Her work shows how this new economic order only imbues technology and commands it into action, and that surveillance capitalism is only a logic in action.

This finding is established by the bearings of Weber's "economic orientation". Weber claims that economic ends are always intrinsic to both the deployment as well as the development of technology. This means that technology is not an end in itself but always a reflection of the objectives held forth by social and economic detriments. He notes how the modern society is so largely oriented economically to profit-making that is it one of the most fundamental facet in the history of technology itself.

A classic example stated in the text about the so called inevitabilism that bewilders the public by conflating commercial imperatives to technological necessity was when Eric Schmidt, CEO of Google in 2009 defended how the search engine maintained the user's search engine history arguing it was a technological clause and not an end in itself, thereby camouflaging the practises of Surveillance Capitalism in the name of technology.

KNOWLEDGE AND POWER

Foucault was an epistemological constructivist and historicist who argued that power and knowledge are inextricably linked to the point where it doesn't make sense to speak of one without the other. As knowledge takes place within a vast system of power relations, Foucault was critical of the idea if people could attain "absolute" knowledge about the world as he realised absolute knowledge was historically contingent. Thus, power bases itself on knowledge by making use of it and reproducing it by shaping it in accordance with its intentions. Thereby allowing power to recreate its own fields of exercise through knowledge.

The modern world uses Big-data in its information civilisation as means to generate knowledge and power making information processed and capitalised by global corporations transforming it to economic power. Surveillance capitalists have succeeded to amass world-historic concentration of power and knowledge. They achieve dominance through the axial principle of social order in an information civilisation that is the division of learning in society. This concerning as it is an unprecedented process that we are yet to know about it's yielding dangers.

NETWORK SOCIETY

Network society understands the social ramifications caused by the interlinking of globalisation and the role of electronic communications and technology in society. Manuel Castells (2004), the concept's leading theorist, defines a network society as "a society whose social structure is made up of networks powered by micro-electronics-based information and communication technologies." His work demonstrates how social networks have always existed; however, the network culture is distinguished by the use of ICTs to help build and maintain far-flung networks in which new kinds of social relations will emerge. This enables to form economic, social, and political relationships which aren't constrained by time - or, in other words, by our spatial position. Varied social relations, traditions, and community exist in separate spaces now adhere to the most influential standards where people can connect people without having the personal interaction and by the use of global net of mass media, internet and computers in a globalizing society. Here, they are becoming less and less connected by a common history and mutual face-to-face relationships. 'Contact' is determines by this shift in the social meaning of place is interpreted.

It is important to understanding how ICTs are used for growth. Comprehending the difference between passive and empowering communication allows what opponents of globalisation see as an intrusive force for cultural homogenization which fosters standardization of powerful technological, commercial, and cultural forces emanating from centres of power and control determining what information and knowledge is and how it is communicated. These centres sometimes have an unprecedented degree of predominance where communication is a two-way process: inflowing information is not just taken in uncritically; it is subject to local interpretation and creative applications. These two concepts are not mutually exclusive: it is not a choice between them. The tension between the efforts of some networks to enforce their ideals and priorities and the efforts of others to resist their dominance is one of the most powerful forces for

change and growth in the network society. Being social media app users youngsters use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) so paramount to a point where it can consider as the central pillar of their life.

POST-MARXISM

Zuboff uses Marx's foundation to give a framework to her critiques of surveillance capitalism as she develops her post-marxist views. The conceptual framing of Utopia, historical materialism and even behavioural modification all encompass post Marxist themes.

Surveillance capitalism allows primitive accumulation akin to the original sin of capitalism. Reviving Marx's old image of capitalism as a vampire that feeds on labour it audaciously lays claim to private experience for translation into fungible commodities instead of claiming land, wealth, etc. as in the industrial capitalism and its market dynamic.

By superimposing means of production with the means of behavioural modification those who control it are the new hegemony with power in society. The new hegemonic class also decides every other sphere of society spanning from what may be deemed valuable, appropriate or even things like leisure and personal relationships – only in means now unimaginable with wider division of knowledge and power.

She views surveillance capitalism as a regression or a break from Marxist philosophy and the linear thought of historical materialism. This stance is held by exploring the impact of neoliberal policies accompanied by surveillance capitalism, hampering the attainment of Utopia as described by Marx.

CHAPTER – 3
METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER – 3

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

Creswell (2003) portrays methodology as a coherent group of methods that harmonize one another and that have the capability to fit to deliver data and findings that will reflect the research question and suits the researcher's purpose. Methodology defines "a contextual structure" for the study as a coherent and logical scheme based on attitudes, opinions, and values that directs researchers' decisions and is regarded as a critical component because it can be used not only to show its relevance, but also to propose better ideas on the same subject to the same researcher and other scholars in the future. The methodology section thus assists in the upgrading and updating of the subject at hand. It should be carried out in an analytical and systemic manner. This chapter contains information regarding the statement of the problem, general and specific objectives, concepts and their theoretical and operational definition, Independent and dependent variables, the universe, sampling method, sample size, research design, tools for data collection.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Surveillance capitalism is the new economic order which severely impacts all spheres of life unseen before. Although first guised as a technological boon, it predicts, commodifies, controls and manipulates human behaviour for profit. It directly impacts autonomy, free will and democracy. This study attempts to understand the impact it can have on college students through the social media app, Instagram.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study was to accomplish the following objectives:

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To study the impact of surveillance capitalism on college students through Instagram

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE

1. To understand the socio - economic profile of the respondents.
2. To study the impact of surveillance capitalism's privacy on respondents.
3. To study the extent of the level of awareness about surveillance capitalism
4. To study the impact of surveillance capitalism on Behavioral Modification with respect to political views
5. To study the impact of surveillance capitalism on free speech.

THEORETICAL DEFINITION

- **Surveillance Capitalism**

It is the new pervasive mode of capitalism of the present society where human behavioral data is commodified instead of capital from labour in new markets that trade in human futures. It thereby severely impacts society accompanied by huge disparities of knowledge and power.

- **Instagram**

It is a social media app of parent company Meta used to share photos or videos both publicly and privately. This app, also enables news channels, artists, or businesses to advertise or show their services.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

- **College students**

Here, college students refer to students of the age 18-29, studying in a UGC recognized institution.

IDENTIFICATION OF VARIABLES

A variable is defined as an attribute of an object of study

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

The independent variable is the variable that when the researcher manipulates or changes, it is assumed to have a direct effect on the dependent variable. The following are the independent variables of the present study;

- Age
- Gender
- Religion
- Annual family income

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

The dependent variable is the variable being tested and measured in an experiment and is 'dependent' on the independent variable. In this study the dependent variable is;

‘The impact of surveillance capitalism’.

RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Suchman, “Research design is not a highly specific plan to be followed without deviation, but rather series of guidepost to keep one headed in right direction”. In the present study, the descriptive research design is used to provide an understanding of the impact of surveillance capitalism on college students in Kochi.

UNIVERSE

The term "universe" (population) in statistics refers to a sum of all items for which data is sought. In this study the universe includes, the college students between the age group 18 to 29 who are using the social media app Instagram in Kochi.

SAMPLE SIZE AND METHOD OF SAMPLING

The number of participants used in a study is referred to as sample size. Here, a sample size of hundred respondents were selected using simple random sampling method.

TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

For data collection and analysis, a number of methodologies may be used. The majority of them are designed around a collection of fundamental resources. Interviews, focus group discussions, evaluation, photography, questionnaires, and case studies are some of the approaches used.

So, the present study uses Questionnaire method by using ‘Google forms’ is used as a tool for data collection, process of collection of data was conducted during the month of February; hence the results are easy and accurate to find the result from the researcher’s point of view.

CHAPTER – 4
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis and interpretation is one of the most important aspects of research. This chapter explains how the collected data are used to accomplish the objectives. Data analysis is essential to the development of any research project. The information was gathered from hundred college students residing in Kochi from the age 18-29. The following chapter provides a systematic and thorough study of respondent data on different parameters.

The subparts include:

- To understand the socio - economic profile of the respondents.
- To study the impact of surveillance capitalism's privacy on respondents.
- To study the extent of the level of awareness about surveillance capitalism
- To study the impact of surveillance capitalism on Behavioral Modification with respect to political views
- To study the impact of surveillance capitalism on free speech.

SOCIO ECONOMIC PARAMETERS

The first part brings the socioeconomic data of the respondents. Income, employment, education, age, and other social supports, among many other things, can have a significant impact on how well we live.

These variables play an important role in sociological surveys because they influence our ability to make life decisions, interact with others, and so on.

4.1 TABLE SHOWING THE AGE OF RESPONDENTS OUT OF 100 OBVERVATIONS

AGE RANGE	MALE	FEMALE	NON-BINARY	PERCENTAGE
18-20	6	23	1	30%
21-23	13	51	1	65%
24-26	1	2	0	3%
27-29	2	0	0	2%
Total	22	76	2	100

Table 4.1 reveals the majority of the respondents fall in the age range of 21-23 and then 18-20. As compared to these two class intervals, 24-26 and 27-29 age groups have fewer respondents. Out of the total respondents, 65% of the respondents fall under the age group of 18-20 years and only 2 percent fall under the age group of 27-29 years. 75% of the respondents fall under the 18-23 age group and only 5 percent lie in the 24-29 age group.

From the entire sample it was found that the maximum number of participants belonged to the age group of 21-23 years.

4.1 FIGURE SHOWING THE GENDER OF RESPONDENTS OUT OF 100 OBSERVATIONS

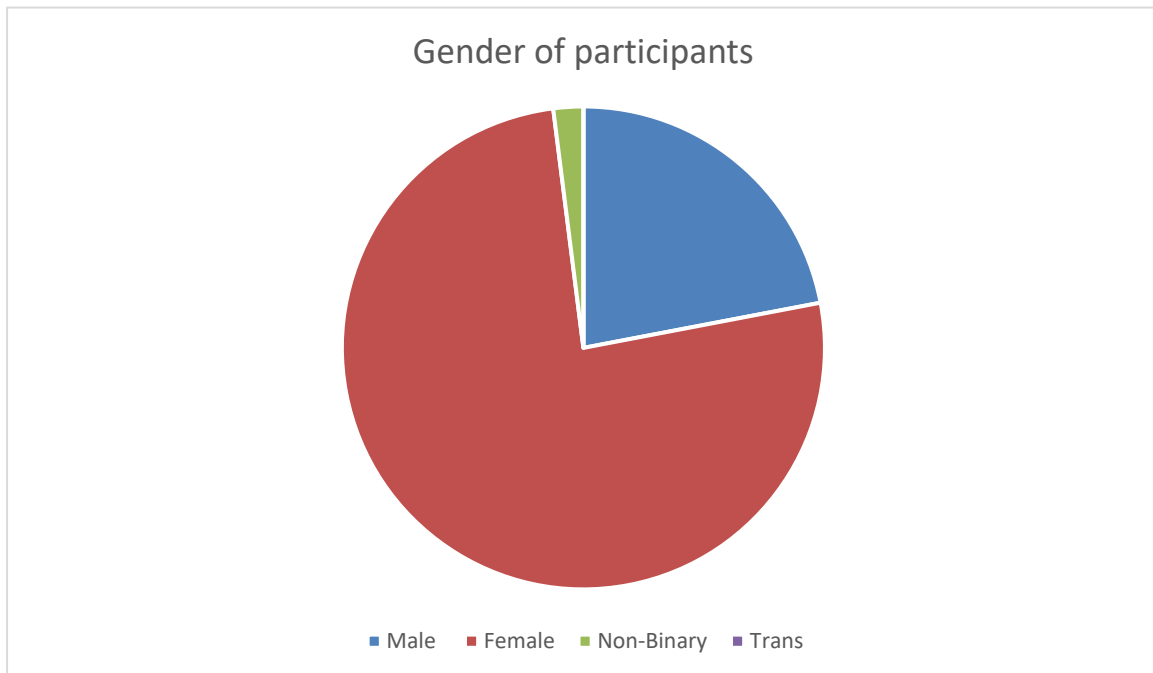
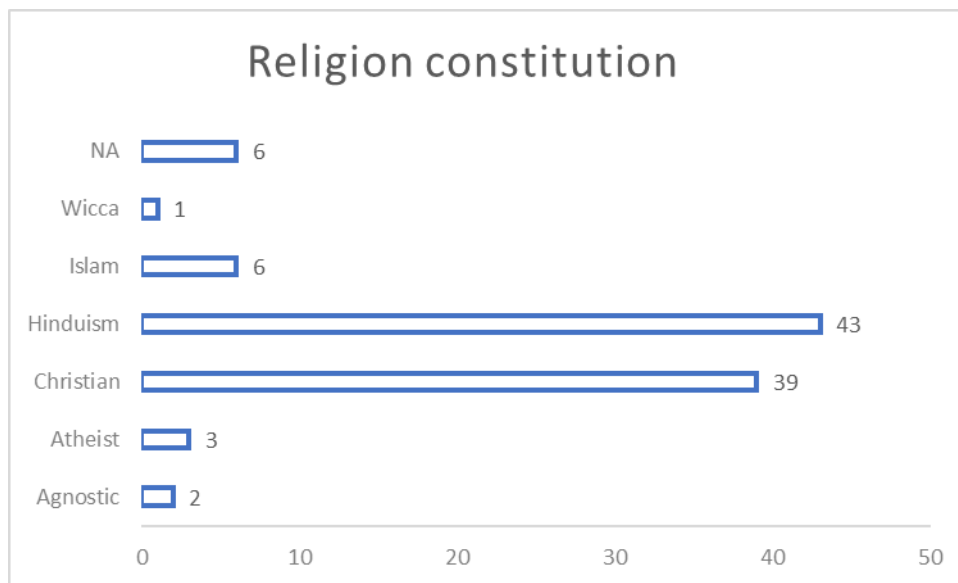


Figure 4.1 reveals that majority of the participants were female with about 76% participation. It is only then that the male population covers the survey with about 22% participation. Although no trans- persons have participated in the survey, about 2% of the population is followed by Non-Binary persons.

4.2 GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF RESPONDANTS RELIGION



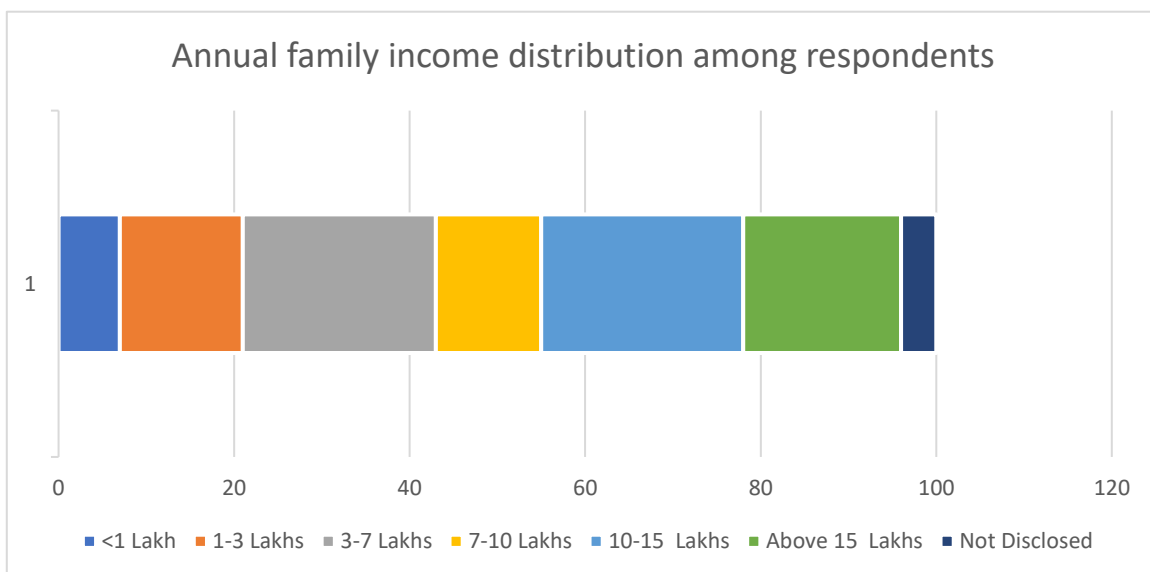
Religion is a major demographic factor and is important for future population growth trends, as well as other social indicators. The figure reveals the majority of the respondents follow Hinduism as Religion, closely followed by Christianity. It can be observed that 82 percent of the respondents follow Hinduism and Christianity. The data shows us that there are few Atheists, Agnostics and Wicca making up under 10 percent of the sample size. Islam forms a small minority of the sample population making up about 6 percent of the size. A small fraction of the respondents has chosen not to disclose their religious preferences and form about 6 percent of the sample size.

4.2 TABLE REPRESENTING THE ANNUAL INCOME OF RESPONDANTS

INCOME	No: of Observations	PERCENTAGE
<1 Lakh	7	7%
1-3 Lakhs	14	14%
3-7 Lakhs	22	22%
7-10 Lakhs	12	12%
10-15 Lakhs	23	23%
Above 15 Lakhs	18	18%
Not Disclosed	4	4%
Total	100	100%

The table shows that 23% of the respondents have 10-15 lakhs as their annual income, followed by 22% of the respondents who have 3-7 lacks as their annual income. About 18% of the respondents have more than 15 lacks as their annual, and about 14% of the respondents have 1-3 lakhs as their annual income. 7% of the participants have below one lack as their annual income and the remaining 4% chose not to disclose their annual income. The data collected shows that most participants except those that disclosed their income belong to the Indian middle class

4.3 GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF ANNUAL INCOME OF RESPONDENTS

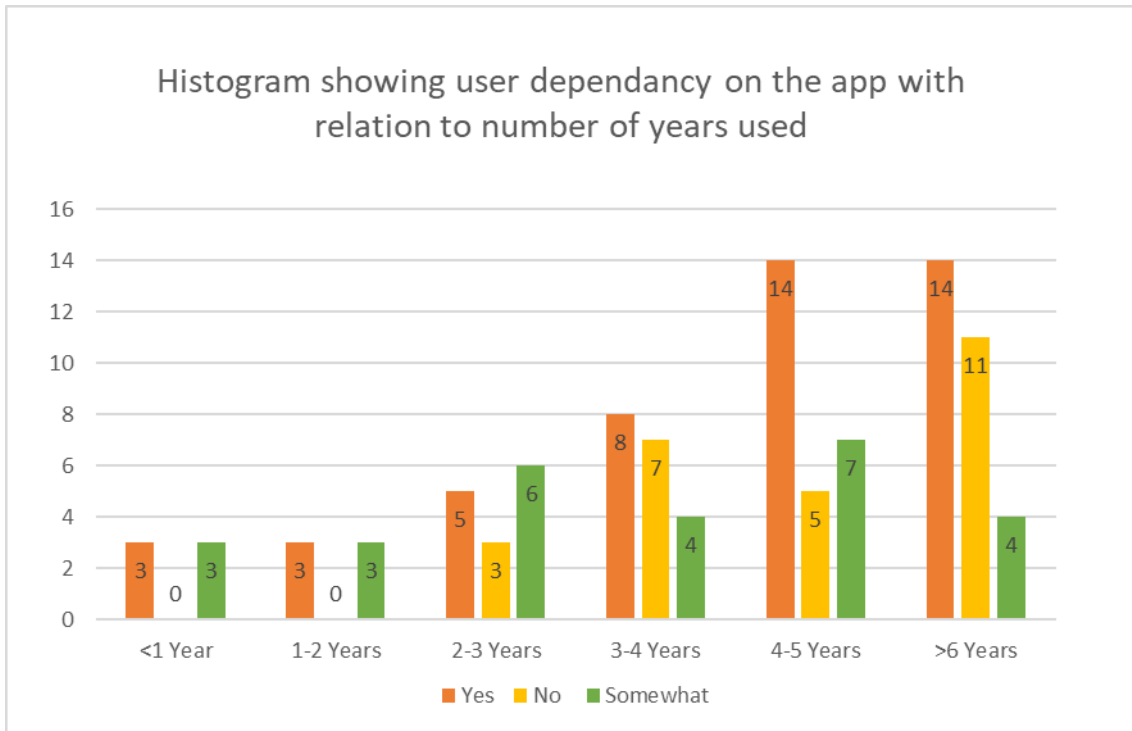


4.3 TABULAR REPRESENTATION OF RESPONDANTS APP USAGE SINCE INCEPTION

YEAR RANGE	PERCENTAGE
< 1 YEAR	6%
1-2 YEARS	6%
2-3 YEARS	14%
3-4 YEARS	19%
4-5 YEARS	26%
>5 YEARS	29%
TOTAL	100%

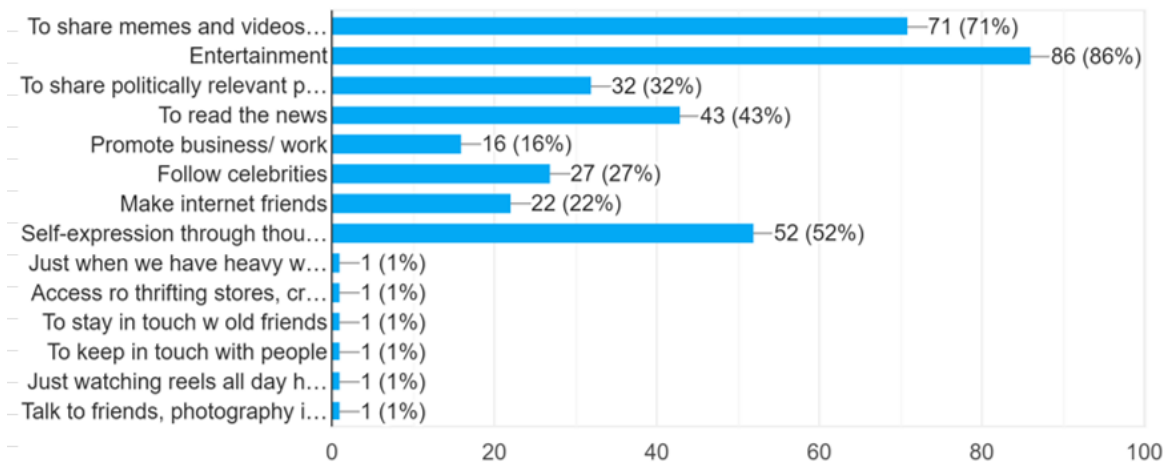
The figure shows that most participants have been using Instagram from the last five years. This data reminds us how Gen Z was a generation born into the age of surveillance capitalism. The next majority of 26% of participants have been using Instagram for the past four to five years, about 19 percent of them have been using Instagram for less than four years, 14% shows less than three years and over 12% of the participants have only been using Instagram since the pandemic.

4.4 GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF RESPONDANTS APP USAGE SINCE INCEPTION AND THEIR DEPENDENCY ON THE APP



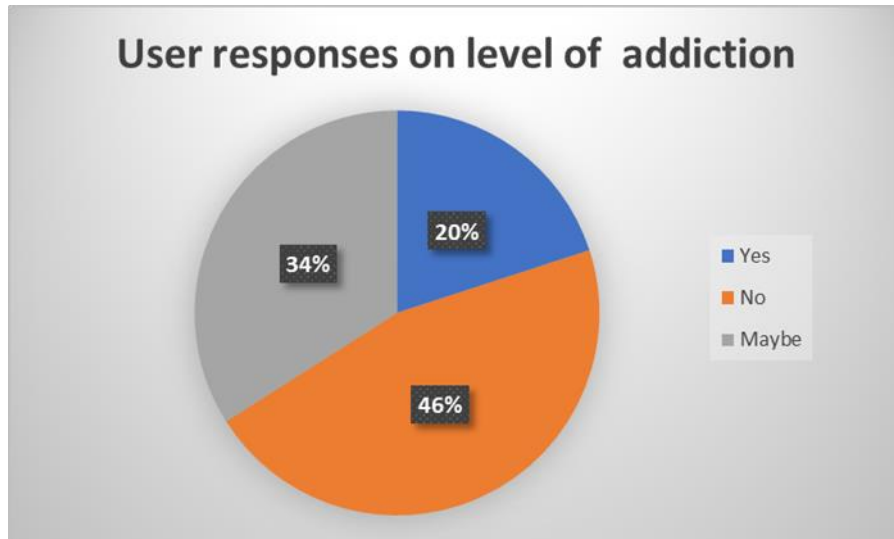
Reading the histogram shows that more the number of years a respondent has spent on the app, greater has been their dependency on it. Out of 59% of the respondents who have spent more than four years on the app more than 28% of them believe that they are dependent on the app. On the contrary, of the 12% of respondents who have spent less than two years on the app, feel that they are only somewhat dependent on the app.

4.5 GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF APP USAGE PURPOSE OF RESPONDENTS



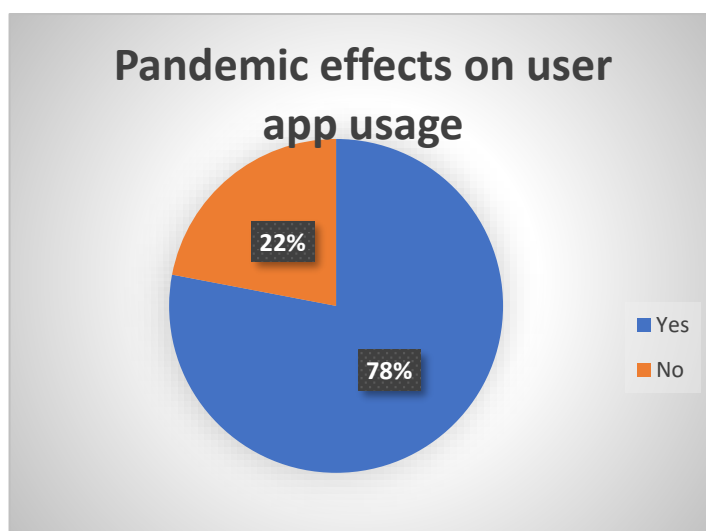
Majority of the participants in the survey use Instagram for entertainment by 86%. However, 71% alone use the app to share memes and videos and 52% use the social media app as a way of self-expression. 32% of the participants share politically relevant posts, and about 43% agree to consume news from the app. About 22% of participants agree to have made internet friends on Instagram, and only 16% use Instagram to promote their work and business. Only 1% of the respondents use Instagram to keep in touch with old friends, shop thrift, etc.

4.6 GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF RESPONDENT'S TAKE OF THEIR ADDICTION TO INSTAGRAM



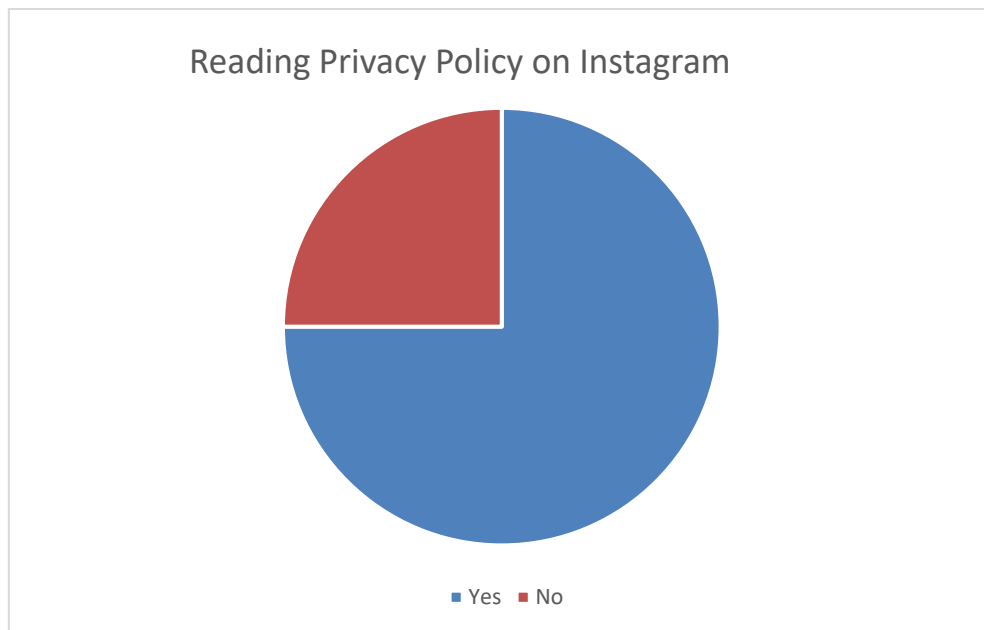
About 46% of the respondents believe that they are not addicted to Instagram. However, 20% acknowledge their addiction to the app and 34% are unsure if they may be addicted or not.

4.7 GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF IMPACT OF INCREASED USAGE OF INSTAGRAM DURING THE PANDEMIC



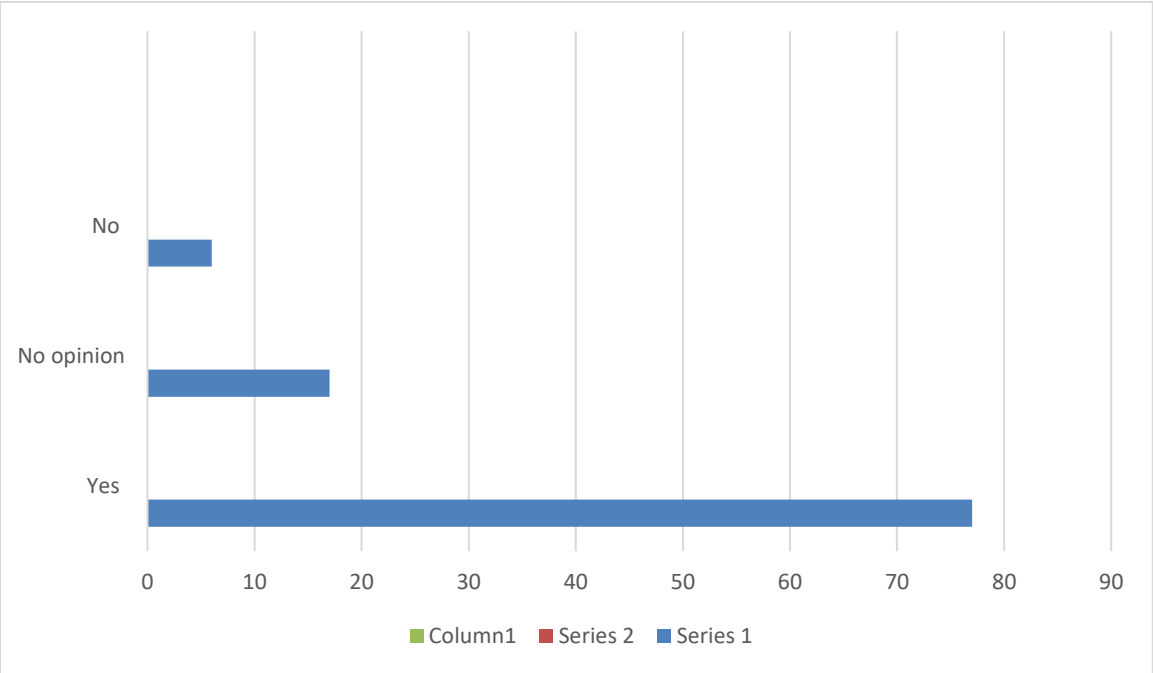
About 78% of respondents agree that they've spent more time on Instagram during the pandemic than 22% of the respondents who claim that their usage has remained the same.

4.8 GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF RESPONDENTS WHO READ THE PRIVACY POLICY OF INSTAGRAM



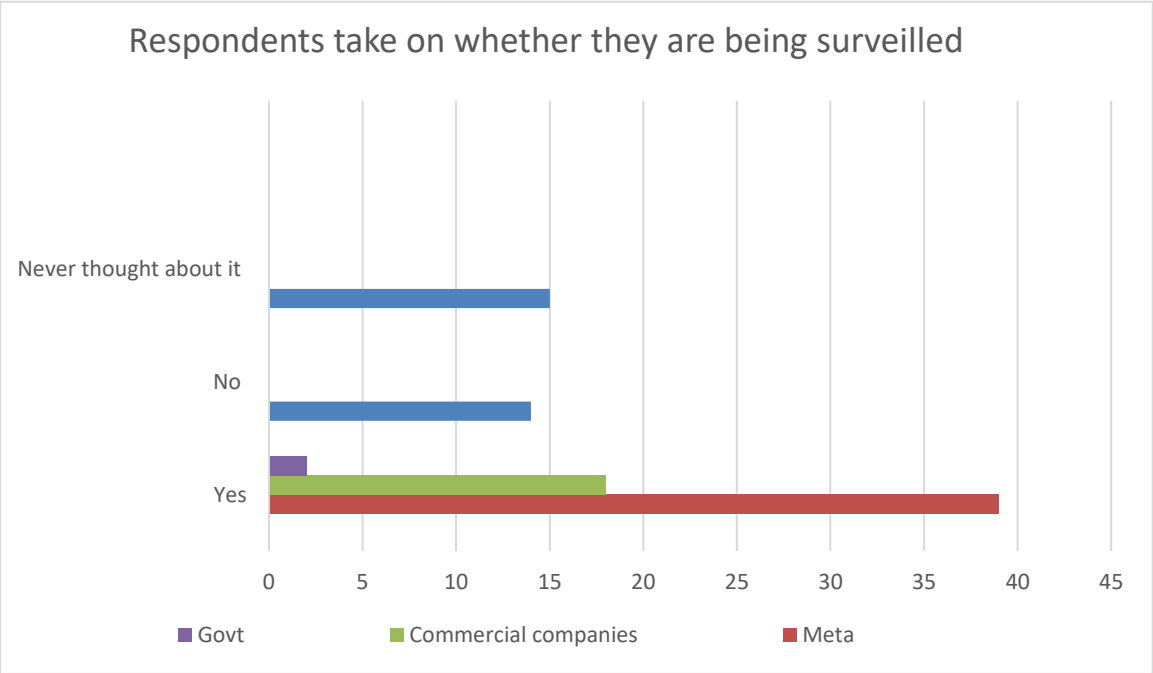
The Pie chart shows that 75% of the respondents do in fact try to read the privacy policy of the social media app before complying to the terms and conditions in order to use the app, however the other 25% are oblivious to it.

4. 9 RESPONDENT’S OPINION ON INSTAGRAM USING LAYMEN LANGUAGE IN THEIR PRIVACY POLICY



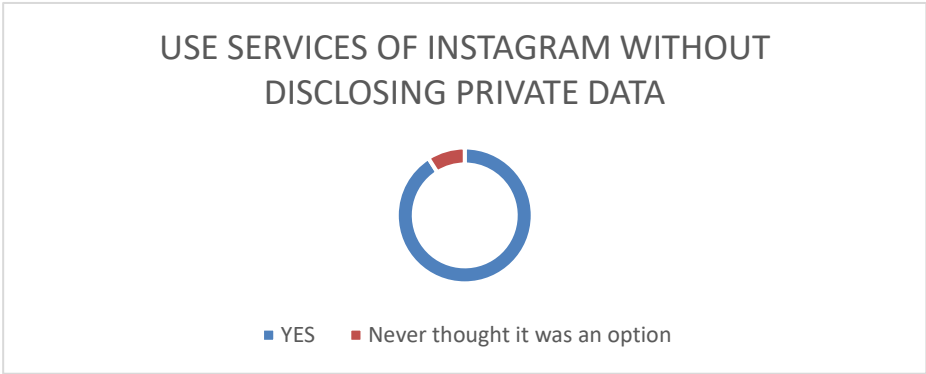
It is noted that 77% of the respondents wished that Instagram would have their privacy policy written with brevity and clarity in laymen language instead of the cumbersome lengthy read that the app currently provides. 17% of the respondents had no opinion on the following and 6% of the respondents were okay with Instagram’s current way of presenting their privacy policy.

4.10 GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION ON RESPONDENTS TAKE ON IF AND WHO SURVEILES THEM ON INSTAGRAM



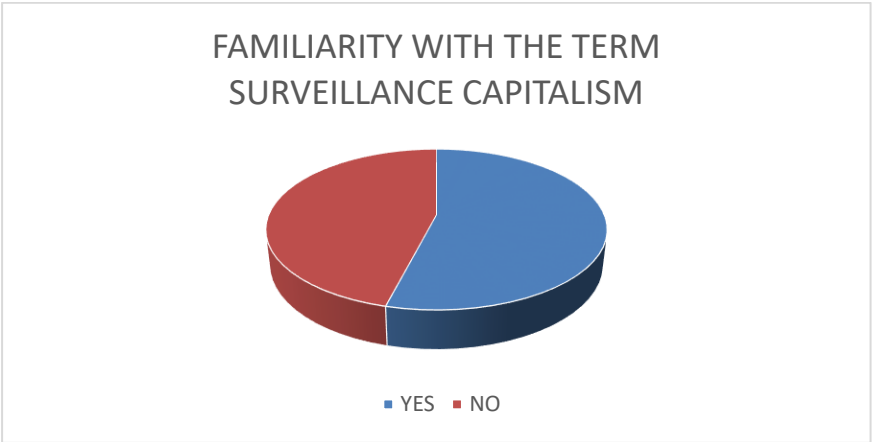
The histogram shows that 71% of the respondents do feel watched over while using Instagram, about 15% never thought about it and the remaining 14% do not in fact feel watched while using Instagram. Of the 71% respondents who feel watched 2% of them feel watched by the Govt, 18% feel watched over by commercial companies and 39% of them feel watched over by Instagram’s parent company Meta.

4. 11 GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF RESPONDENTS WISHING TO USE INSTAGRAM BY KEEPING THEIR DATA PRIVATE

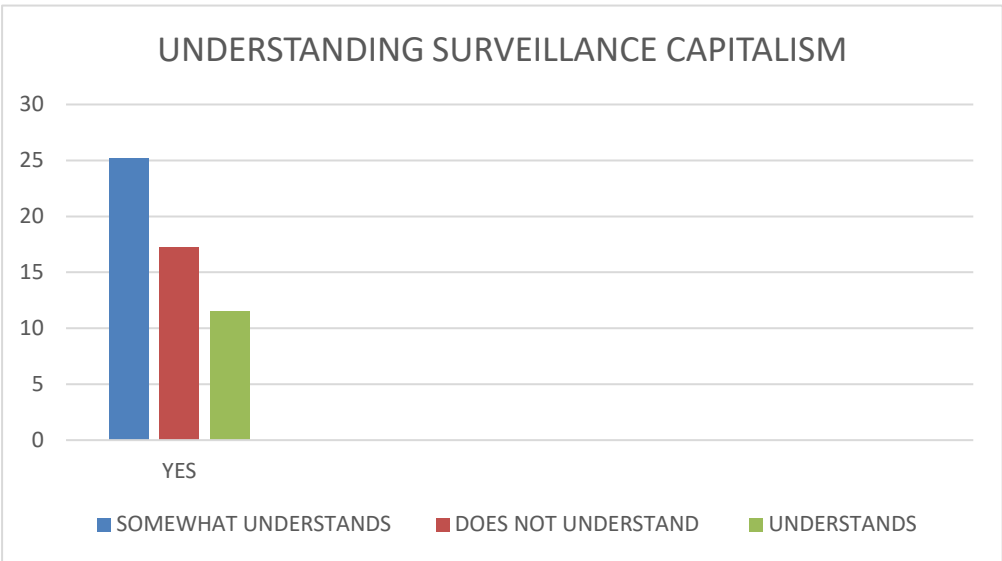


About 91% of the respondents wished that they could use the services of Instagram without compromising their privacy and private data whereas, the other 9% did not know that there was an inherent choice to actually keep their data to themselves yet enjoy the means of a social media app like Instagram.

4.12 GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION SHOWING NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS FAMILIAR WITH THE TERM SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM

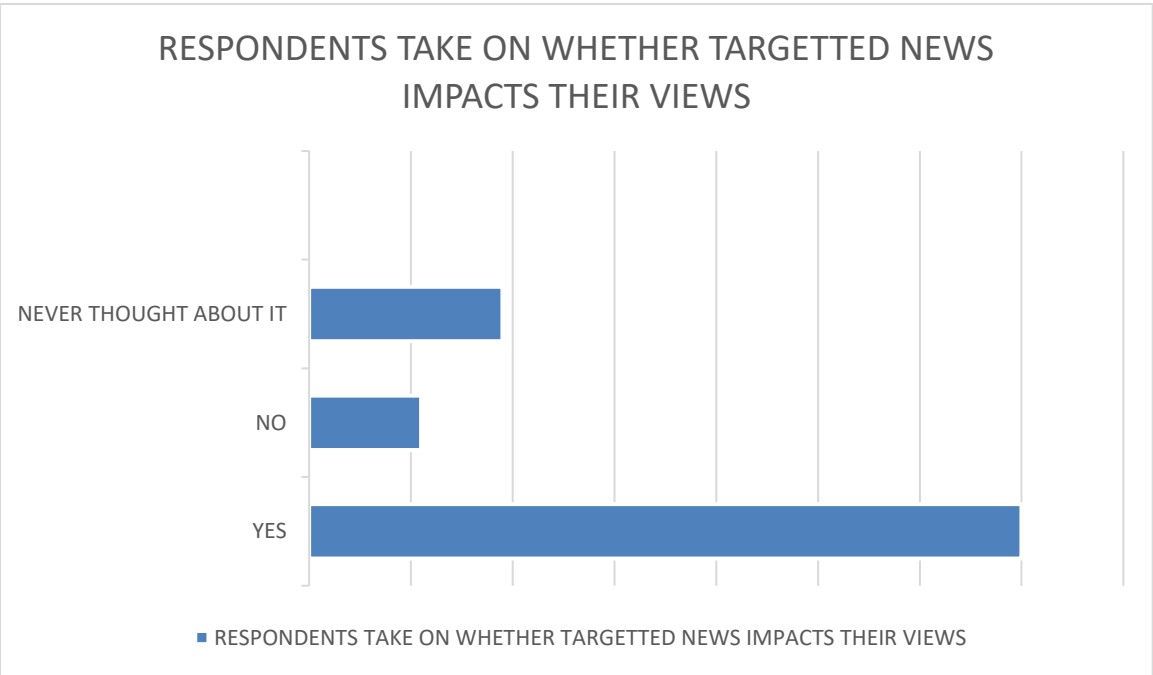


4.13 GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION RESPONDENTS UNDERSTANDING OF SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM



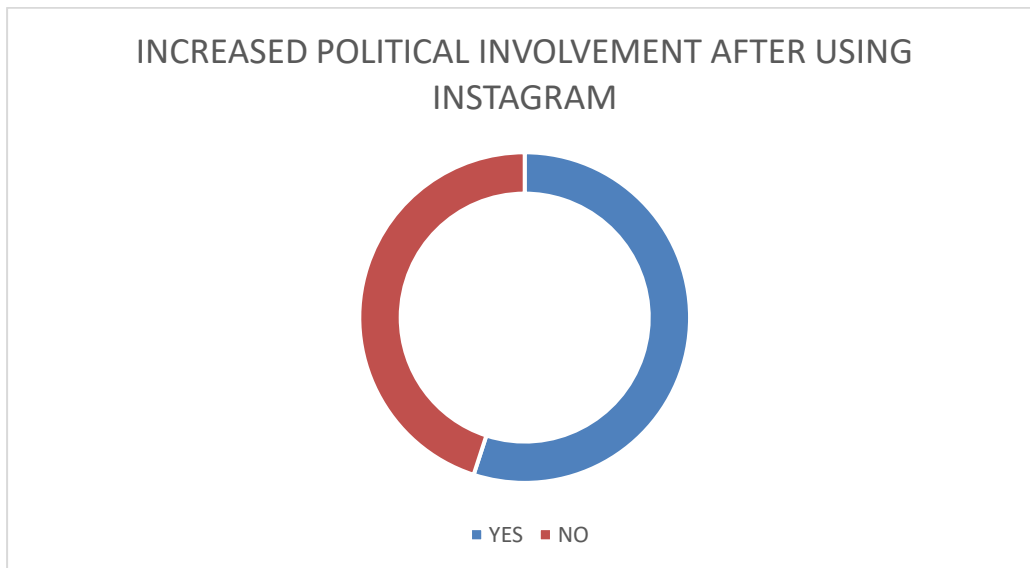
The following figures show that about 54% of the respondents do not in fact know about the new economic order of surveillance capitalism that they are subjected to. On the contrary, 46% of the respondents have at least come across the term. Of the 46%, 25% of respondents only somewhat understand it, 17% have no clue and only 11% understand the phenomenon. This means that only one/tenth of the respondents are even aware of surveillance capitalism.

4.14 RESPONDENTS TAKE ON WHETHER TARGETTED NEWS IMPACT THEIR WORLD VIEWS



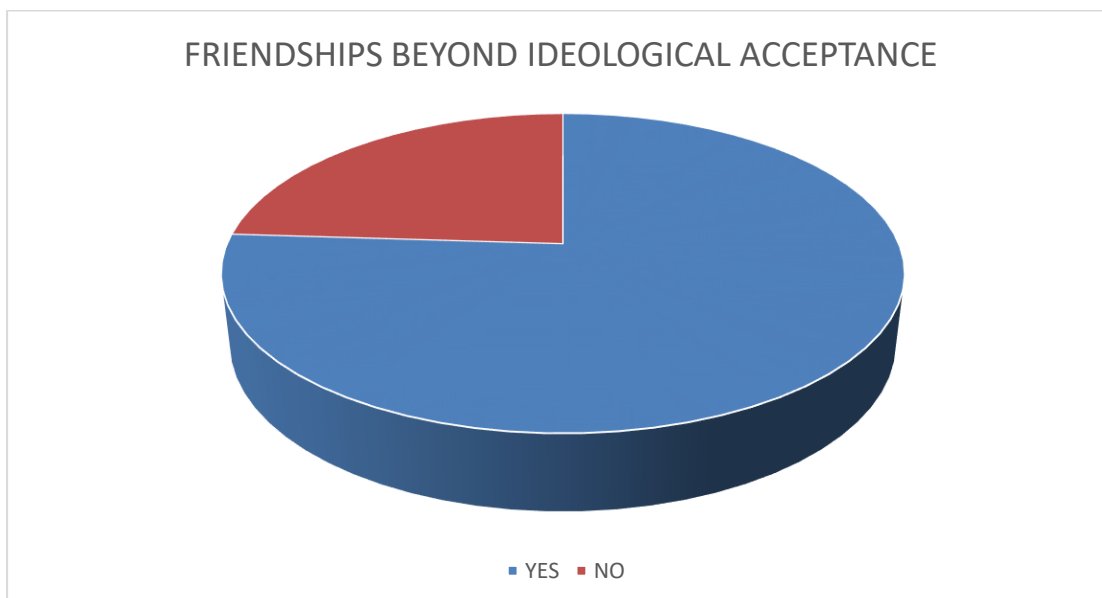
From the graph, it is clear that most respondents are aware about the fact that targeted news do impact the perspectives they hold on current affairs. In the survey conducted, 86% of the respondents admitted to consuming news from Instagram. Out of which, 70% admit that targeted news impact their world views, 19% never thought about targeted news impacting their world view and 11% are confident that targeted news do not impact them or have a role in forming their perspectives on current affairs.

4.15 GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION ON RESPONDENTS' POLITICAL ACTIVISM AFTER USING INSTAGRAM



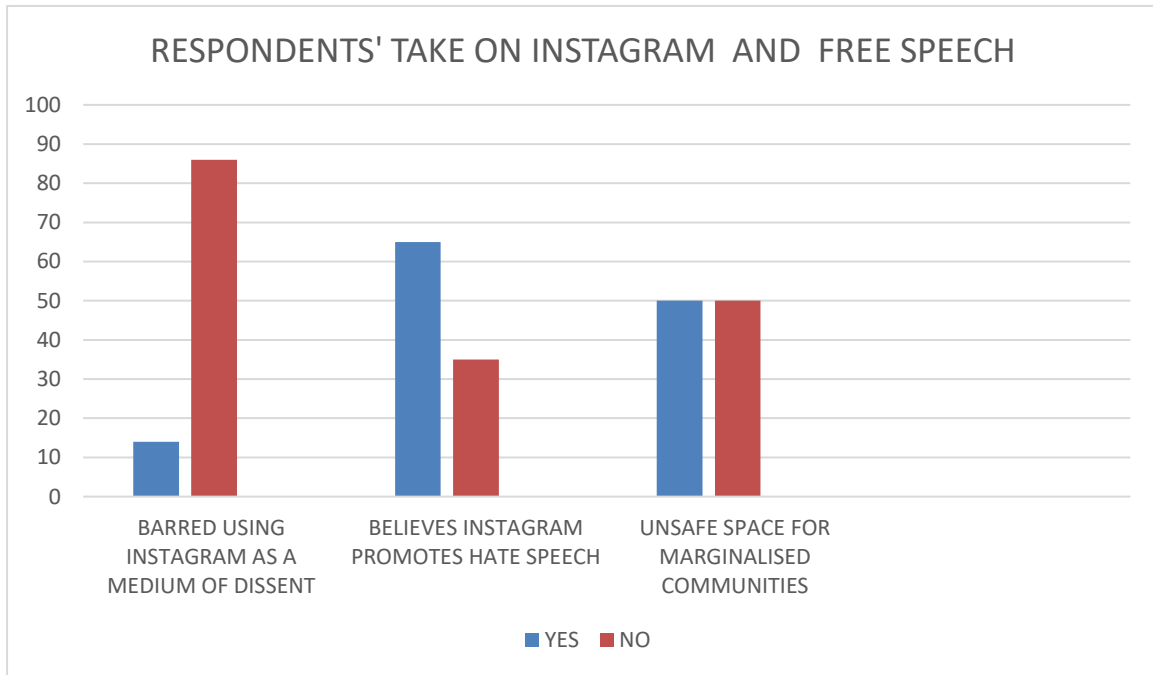
The pie chart shows that even though a majority of 55% of respondents have not increased their political participation, 45% of the respondents have in fact been more politically active.

4. 16 GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF RESPONDENTS ATTITUDINAL CHANGE ON HOLDING FRIENDSHIPS WITH PEOPLE THAT DON'T ALIGN TO THEIR IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION SINCE THE USE OF INSTAGRAM



Although 75% of respondents still make friends with people who don't align with their political views, about 25% of the respondents have admitted that they no more hold friendships with people who aren't ideologically similar ever since they used Instagram.

4. 17 GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF RESPONDENTS TAKE ON INSTAGRAM AND FREE SPEECH



The following graph shows that 14% of respondents have been barred on Instagram every time they used it as a medium of political dissent. About 65% of the respondents agree that Instagram also promotes hate speech and nearly 50% of the respondents agree that Instagram is an unsafe digital space for people from marginalized communities.

CHAPTER – 5
FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

CHAPTER - 5

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The commencement of this project has been solely to trace the impact of surveillance capitalism on Gen Z as we have been born into the age of surveillance capitalism. This quantitative study opted to choose Instagram as the social media app for two requisite reasons. Firstly, Instagram is the most popular social media app among college students besides WhatsApp. And secondly, the impact of surveillance capitalism can most easily be identified through social media apps. Social media apps were in fact the site where surveillance capitalism began to grow exponentially.

This study has had five specific objectives which it meticulously tried to research and find conclusions too. They are written below as the following.

The first objective, almost as is obvious to try and understand the socio- economic background of the participants of the survey. The participants of the survey hail from middle class families where majority of the income ranges about and above 10-15 lacks annually, followed by the next majority below 10 lacks annually and only 14% of the respondents have an annual income below three lacks. The majority of the respondents follow Hinduism and Christianity by 82% percent. The data shows us that there are few Muslims, Atheists, Agnostics and Wicca making up under 16% percent of the sample size and rest 6% chose not to disclose their religious identity. Majority of the participants of the survey identified as women, followed by men. There were no transgenders in the survey, however, 2% of the respondents identified as non-binary.

Another observation made is that the majority of the participants have used Instagram from the past four years and 59% of the respondents who have spent more than four years on the app more than 28% of them believe that they are dependent on the app. This dependency has increased by 78% since the lockdown for various reasons like stress, boredom, keeping in touch with friends, entertainment, etc. Another observation made is that 20% of the respondents acknowledge their addiction to the app and about 34% are unsure if they may be addicted or not.

The second objective was to measure the impact of Surveillance Capitalism's privacy on respondents. The survey showed that 75% of the respondents do in fact try to read the privacy policy of the social media app before complying to its terms and conditions however, 77% of the respondents wished that Instagram would have their privacy policy written with brevity and clarity in laymen language instead of the cumbersome lengthy read that the app currently provides. It

must also be noted that 17% of the respondents had no opinion and 6% didn't mind their data being collected by the app. Another observation is that 71% of the respondents feel watched over while using Instagram, about 15% never thought about it and the remaining 14% did not feel watched or surveilled while using Instagram. Of the 71% respondents who feel watched 2% of them feel watched by the Govt, 18% feel watched over by commercial companies and 39% of them feel watched over by Instagram's parent company Meta. And finally, 91% of the respondents wished that they could use the services of Instagram without compromising their and the other 9% did not know about an inherent choice to actually keep their data to themselves yet enjoy the means of a social media app like Instagram.

The third objective was to measure the awareness about Surveillance Capitalism. About 54% of the respondents do not in fact know about the new economic order of surveillance capitalism that they are subjected to. On the contrary, 46% of the respondents have at least come across the term. It is daunting to note that only one in ten of respondents even understand the phenomenon of surveillance capitalism.

The fourth objective was to find the impact of surveillance capitalism on the behavioural modification it brought forth on people with respect to their political orientation, views and perspectives. It is concerning to note that among the users who consume news in this social media platform about 70% admit that targeted news impact their world views, 19% never thought about targeted news impacting their world view and 11% are confident that targeted news do not impact them. 45% of the participants also agreed to increased political participation after using Instagram and about 25 % of the respondents have admitted that they no more hold friendships with people who aren't ideologically similar to them ever since they used Instagram. This ideological divide may deeply be concerning for the harmony of our society.

The final objective was to understand the impact of surveillance capitalism on free speech. The collected data shows that 14% of respondents have been barred on Instagram every time they used it as a medium of political dissent. About 65% of the respondents agree that Instagram also promotes hate speech and nearly 50% of the respondents agree that Instagram is an unsafe digital space for people from marginalized communities.

The study also shows significant relation between surveillance capitalism and the gender and religion the respondents identified with.

SUGGESTIONS

The only way to combat the impact of Surveillance Capitalism that trades in human futures and takes private human experiences as fungible tokens is spread awareness about this new unprecedented economic order that has no current law to stop it. By spreading awareness and raising collective consciousness alone will allow people to come together and fight big companies that decide the future of our societies. This alone can help bridge the widening gap of knowledge and power between people and surveillance capitalists and pave way for a more inclusive and healthy society. Individual understanding of the workings of surveillance capitalism also makes people mindful and aware each time they fall victim to it.

CONCLUSION

From the study it can be concluded that there is a very real impact of surveillance capitalism among the youth in Kochi. Only a tenth of the respondents knew the workings of this new economic order. As this industry feeds on the attention span, it showed increased usage and dependency of the app among users who've been on the platform for more than four years. The study showed that even though respondents tried to read the privacy policy they still wished for laymen language with brevity to truly understand privacy concerns that the app leaves opaque. The survey also showed that about one tenth of the respondents could not separate technology from the ill practices of surveillance capitalism as they didn't know it was possible to keep their personal data to themselves and yet use the app. As the survey also tried to enquire about the impact of surveillance capitalism on people's political orientation and free speech, it is gravely concerning to note that majority of the respondents admitted that targeted news have changed their perspectives on current affairs, majority believe that Instagram doesn't hold a safe space for marginalized communities and promotes hate speech, 25% of them no more hold friendships with people whose ideological orientation isn't similar to them since using the app, and more than a tenth the of respondents have been barred on Instagram every time they used it as a medium of political dissent. All these malpractices are indeed a grave concern for the harmony of society, and therefore needs immediate attention.

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APPENDIX

A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM ON COLLEGE STUDENTS THROUGH INSTAGRAM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KOCHI

Questionnaire

*required questions

1. Age*
2. Gender: Female / Male / Others (Specify)*
3. Religion : Hindu / Christian / Muslim / Others (specify)*
4. Annual Family Income:*
5. How long have you been an Instagram user? *
 - Above 6+ years
 - About 5 – 4 years
 - About 4-3 years
 - About 3-2 years
 - About 2-1 year
 - About a few months
6. How many hours do you think you spend each day using Instagram? *
 - Less than 2 hours
 - 2-4 hours
 - 4-6 hours
 - 6-8 hours
 - 8+ hours
7. How many hours do you actually spend on the app? (Please check your activity time) *
8. Do you agree that Instagram is an important part of your day-to-day activities ? *
 - Yes
 - No
 - Somewhat

9. For what purposes do you use Instagram? * (Please select all applicable options)
- To share memes and videos to friends
 - Entertainment
 - To share politically relevant posts and videos
 - To read the news
 - Promote business/ work
 - Follow celebrities
 - Make internet friends
 - Self-expression through thoughts, photos, videos and art
 - Others (please specify)
10. Do you think you may be addicted to Instagram? *
- Yes
 - No
 - Maybe
11. Has the pandemic increased your usage of Instagram? *
- Yes
 - No
12. If yes, why? (Please select all applicable options)
- Boredom
 - Stress
 - To keep in touch during lockdown
 - Others (specify)
13. Have you ever tried to read the privacy policy of Instagram? *
- Yes
 - No
14. Do you think Instagram and other apps should have a brief and easy notice about its privacy policies so all users may understand? *
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know enough to give an opinion
15. Do you feel watched over while using Instagram? *
- Yes
 - No
 - Never thought about it
16. If yes, who do you think is watching over you? (Please select all applicable options)
- The government
 - Meta (the company formerly called Facebook)
 - Others (please specify)
17. Have you ever thought about what big tech companies do with your personal data? *

- Of course
- Never
- Sometimes
- Not bothered

18. Do you think that allowing Instagram to access your contacts, audio, or phone's gallery may be safe? *

- Yes
- No
- I don't think it is a problem as many people I know use it

19. Are you okay with your personal data being collected in exchange to use the services on Instagram? *

- Yes
- No

20. Do you wish users had a choice to keep their data private and yet use services of Instagram? *

- Yes, I always wish so
- Never thought about it

21. Do you feel uncomfortable about targeted ads and posts on your feed as it knows every product or subject you like? *

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

22. What are the other social media platforms that you use? * (Please select all applicable options)

- Facebook
- Tumblr
- Reddit
- Snapchat
- Twitter
- Telegram
- Youtube
- Whatsapp
- LinkedIn
- Others (please specify)

23. Do you feel safe using other apps? *

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

24. Have you ever come across the term Surveillance Capitalism? *

- Yes
- No

25. If yes, do you understand the phenomena?
- Yes
 - No
 - Somewhat
26. Have you ever felt that smartphones or smart watches that know about your location, purchases or even your heart rate could pose a threat to you? *
- Yes
 - No
 - Never thought about it
27. Are you concerned about the breach of privacy due to technological innovations like smart phones or CCTV cameras as they saturate into public spaces like malls and streets? *
- Yes
 - No
28. Do you trust big tech companies like Google, Meta (previously called Facebook), apple, Microsoft, Amazon, etc? *
- Yes, they are ethical in their approach
 - No, the companies are secretive
 - I don't know
29. Do you consume news on Instagram? *
- Yes
 - No
 - Sometimes
30. Do you think consuming targeting news according to your liking impacts how you view current affairs? *
- Yes
 - No
 - Never thought about it
31. Do you think consuming targeted news on Instagram according to your liking makes you more emotionally charged? *
- Yes
 - No
 - Never thought about it
32. Do you think the news you consume on Instagram is as reliable as daily newspapers? *
- Yes
 - No
33. Have you become more politically involved due to using social media apps like Instagram? *
- Yes

- No

34. Have you ever been reported or barred while using Instagram as a medium of dissent? *

- Yes
- No

35. Do you think Instagram promotes hate speech? *

- Yes
- No

36. Do you think Instagram is safe for marginalized communities like women, Dalits or the disabled? *

- Yes
- No

37. Do you make friends with people who share different political views? *

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

38. Has this attitude changed since you have used Instagram? *

- Yes
- No

39. Do you have internet friends on Instagram?*

- Yes
- No

40. If yes, do they share your political views?

- Yes
- No

41. Do you think that our existing laws will protect us from exploitation of our data? *

- Yes
- No
- Never thought about it

42. Would you like to mention any particular change(s) you have noticed in yourself that may be due to usage of Instagram?

- Yes
- No

43. Do you have any suggestions?

