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NAVIGATING THE JOB MARKET: SOCIAL MEDIA'S ROLE IN STUDENT EMPLOYMENT TRENDS IN POLLACHI

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ABSTRACT
In today's digital era, social media has evolved beyond a platform for social interaction and emerged as a powerful tool in shaping employment opportunities, especially among students. This study explores the growing influence of social media on the employment trends of students in Pollachi. With increasing digital engagement, platforms like LinkedIn, Apana, Indeed and Nakuri are being used not only for networking but also for job discovery and professional development. The research aims to identify the key factors that drive students to use social media for career-related purposes, including personal motivation, peer influence, digital literacy, and accessibility. Data for this study was collected through a structured questionnaire using a convenient sampling method among students in the Pollachi region. The findings offer valuable insights into how social media is reshaping job market navigation for the younger generation.
KEYWORDS: *Social Media, Student Employment, Job Market, Digital Networking, Pollachi, Career Trends*

INTRODUCTION
In the evolving digital landscape, social media has emerged as a transformative force, influencing various aspects of modern life, including the job market. India, with one of the world's largest youth populations, is experiencing a significant shift in how students and recent graduates seek employment. With the rise in internet penetration, mobile connectivity, and digital literacy, students increasingly rely on platforms such as LinkedIn, Apana, Nakuri, and Indeed not only for social engagement but also for professional networking and career opportunities.

The town of Pollachi, known for its educational institutions and growing student community, is no exception to this trend. As traditional job-seeking methods become less dominant, students in Pollachi are embracing digital tools to connect with potential employers, access job information, attend virtual interviews, and build personal brands online. The influence of social media on employment trends is further enhanced by factors such as peer influence, ease of access to job-related content, and the growing number of digital hiring initiatives by companies.

According to the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), the number of active social media users in the country has grown steadily, creating new pathways for career exploration. Platforms like LinkedIn have become virtual career fairs, while Instagram and YouTube are being used by students to showcase portfolios and entrepreneurial ventures. Social media not only bridges the gap between students and the corporate world but also empowers them with the resources needed to navigate a competitive job market.

This study aims to explore how social media platforms are shaping the employment preferences, behaviours, and outcomes of students in Pollachi. By identifying the key factors influencing this trend, the research seeks to offer insights that can benefit educators, employers, and policymakers in understanding and supporting the digital career journey of the youth.

REVIEW OF LITRATURE
Nikolaou, I. (2014) "Nikolaou found that although both genders use social networking platforms for job-seeking, male users were more inclined to explore professional platforms like LinkedIn, while female users leaned toward visually engaging platforms for informal networking." This difference suggests a gender-based preference in online professional behaviour.

Khan, M. L. (2017) "Khan's study highlighted that gender influences the intensity and purpose of social media usage." Men were more likely to use platforms for professional advancement and job search, whereas women used them more for communication and support, indicating a disparity in strategic usage.

Sivakumar, K., & Rajendran, C. (2020) "Their study focused on Tamil Nadu college students and showed a clear gender-based variation in social media engagement." Male students were more active on platforms like Naukri and LinkedIn for job-related purposes, while female students showed higher usage of Indeed, attributing their choice to ease of use and accessibility.

Verma, N., & Agarwal, S. (2019) "Verma and Agarwal found that gender stereotypes and digital confidence levels affected how male and female students used job search platforms." Males were

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more likely to self-promote on professional networks, whereas females expressed greater concern for privacy and online presentation.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To understand the demographic profile of students in Pollachi who use social media for employment-related purposes.
- ✓ To examine the association between gender and the use of different social media platforms for job searching among students in Pollachi.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a descriptive research design aimed at analysing how social media influences student employment trends in Pollachi. A structured questionnaire was developed, drawing from validated metrics and past research studies focusing on digital behaviour, social networking, and job-seeking practices among students. The data was collected from 384 students across various colleges and educational institutions in Pollachi using the convenience sampling method. The survey included both closed-ended and multiple-choice questions to assess students' usage of social media platforms for employment-related purposes.

To interpret the data, descriptive statistical tools were used to summarize demographic and usage patterns. Additionally, the Chi-square test was applied to examine the association between selected demographic variables (such as age, gender, education level) and students' use of social media for job search and professional networking.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data collected from 384 respondents in Pollachi was analyzed using the latest version of SPSS. This software facilitated the transformation of raw data into meaningful insights through descriptive statistics, cross-tabulation, Chi-square tests, and factor analysis, thereby providing a clear understanding of how students engage with social media in their job search process.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Particulars		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	214	55.7%
	Female	170	44.3%
Age	20-22	168	43.8%
	23- 25	125	32.6%
	Above 25	83	21.6%
Education	Diploma	155	40.4%
	Undergraduate	179	46.6%
	Post graduate	39	10.2%
Current Employment Status	Part- time Employed	143	37.2%
	Full-time Employed	27	7.0%
	Seeking Employment	162	42.2%
	Not Seeking Employment	34	8.9%
	Total	384	100.0%

The demographic profile of the respondents indicates that 55.7% are male and 44.3% are female, showing a relatively balanced gender distribution. The majority of respondents (43.8%) fall within the age group of 20–22 years, followed by 32.6% in the 23–25 age group, and 21.6% above the age of 25. Regarding educational qualifications, 46.6% are undergraduates, 40.4% hold diplomas, and 10.2% are postgraduates. In terms of current employment status, 42.2% of respondents are seeking employment, 37.2% are part-time employed, 8.9% are not seeking employment, and 7.0% are employed full-time.

TABLE 2: Gender and social media platforms do you use for job searching

Gender And Social Media Platforms do you use for job searching	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-Sided)
LinkedIn	14.541	4	.006
Indeed	2.072	4	.723
Naukri	.700	4	.951
Apna	.700	4	.951

A Chi-Square test was conducted to examine the association between gender and the use of various social media platforms for job searching. The null hypothesis assumed no association between gender and the use of each platform. The results showed a statistically significant relationship for LinkedIn ($p = .006$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests that

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LinkedIn usage for job searching significantly differs by gender. However, for Indeed (p = .723), Naukri (p = .951), and Apna (p = .951), the results were not statistically significant. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis for these platforms, indicating that gender does not have a significant impact on the use of Indeed, Naukri, or Apna for job searching.

CONCLUSION

Social media has revolutionized the way students in Pollachi engage with the job market. As a result, employers should adapt their recruitment strategies to account for the varying ways students interact with these platforms. Furthermore, universities should consider integrating social media literacy into their career services programs to help students effectively navigate digital tools, thereby enhancing their job search strategies and preparing them to succeed in an increasingly digital and competitive employment landscape.

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