



## Astrology on Social Media: A study on Perception and Consumption among Youth in India

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**Abstract:** This research explores the enduring fascination with astrology in today's society, particularly among Indian youth through social media. Despite a historical decline in the 17th century, astrology has experienced a resurgence, deeply embedding itself in Indian culture post-World War II. The study aims to uncover the factors influencing youth engagement with astrology on social media, analyzing its impact on decision-making and lifestyle choices. Using a mixed-methods

approach, including questionnaires and interviews, the research focuses on popular platforms and forms of astrology content. With a sample size of 86 respondents aged 15-29, representing diverse demographics, the study illuminates evolving attitudes towards astrology's validity in the digital age.

**Keywords:** Astrology, Social Media, Perception, Consumption, youth, India.

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### Introduction:

According to *American Astronomical Society*, 'astrology' is the belief that the positioning of the stars and planets affect the way events occur on earth. The ancient practice of interpreting celestial movements and their influence on human affairs, astrology has enjoyed a resurgence in popularity, particularly among youth in India. Fueled by the accessibility and interconnectivity of social media platforms, astrology has transcended its traditional boundaries, transforming into a vibrant online space for engagement, entertainment, and even personal empowerment. From daily horoscopes and compatibility quizzes to meme-able breakdowns of planetary alignments, social media has become a fertile ground for the consumption and perception of astrology among young Indians.

**Historical Evolution:** Historically, astrologers were consulted through ancient texts, but the advent of modern media has dynamically transformed its presence and dissemination. Deeply ingrained in Indian

culture, astrology influences various aspects of society, influencing decisions related to marriage, career paths, and significant life choices. The Bombay High Court reaffirmed that astrology is a science, when it dismissed a PIL filed by an NGO, *Janhit Manch* that had challenged astrology as science in 2011. The court observed that the Supreme Court had already in 2004 ruled that astrology was a science (Vyas H., February 2011, The Times of India). The former Uttarakhand Chief Minister and Haridwar MP, Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', during a parliament debate in 2014, had remarked, "All streams of science are dwarfed in stature when compared with the science of astrology. Astrology is the number one science for the entire world." (Nandy A., May 2019, The Quint). Astrology helped people decide when to plant crops and go to war, and was used to predict a person's fate and interpret his character (Smallwood C., October 2019, The New Yorker). The evolution from traditional consultations to daily forecasts in newspapers during the 1930s marked a significant shift. Daily forecasts, absent from astrology for over 5,000 years, were included in newspapers in the 1930s when the first horoscope column appeared in Britain's Sunday Express (Prendergast C., March 2021, Vogue India).

**From Traditional Consultations to Social Media Dominance:** In an era where science is at its zenith, astrology continues to captivate a global audience, transcend historical and cultural boundaries. Today, with advancements in communication technology, electronic media has emerged as a prominent platform for disseminating astrological content to the masses, establishing a thriving market on social media (Pinarba I. G., 2021). Many astrologers have created channels on social media, a contemporary channel for information sharing, due to the growth of astrology content on social media. Astrotalk, with 660K followers on Instagram, is the highest rated astrology site on social media. It is followed by Instastro (191K), Astrosage (100K), and Astrofyogi (65.6K), etc.

**Astrology's Thriving Presence on Social Media and Market Projections:** In recent years, the popularity of astrology, especially among India's youth, has experienced a notable surge, propelled by increased digital accessibility. When Aliza Kelly tried to raise money in 2015 for *Align* (a short-lived astrological dating app), potential investors made fun of her. Since its

launch, in 2017, it has been downloaded six million times, 80% of users are female, and their average age is 24 (Smallwood C., October 2019, The New Yorker). According to the editor-in-chief of Cosmopolitan magazine, Jessica Pels, who has expanded the magazine's print coverage of astrology to nine pages in every issue, 74% of Cosmo readers report that they are "obsessed" with astrology; 72% check their horoscope every day (Smallwood C., October 2019, The New Yorker). Google Trends highlights a peak in searches for "birth chart" and "astrology" in 2020, with 3.4 million global searches for "horoscopes" (Abraham J., January 2022, Business Worl's Disrupt). India's football coach Igor Stimac reportedly sought advice from astrologer Bhupesh Sharma, introduced by a top AIFF official, two days before a crucial Asian Cup qualifier against Afghanistan in June, 2022 (Vasavda M., September 2023, The Indian Express, 1). Approximately 100,000 new astrologers enter the market each year (Samriddhi C., Roshan D., January 2023). According to *Allied Market Research*, uncertainty is another major factor that draws people to astrology. According to studies, it is more stressful to not know what might happen than to know that something negative would occur. In last few years, there has been a significant shift in the astrological app market. In comparison to the previous year's revenue of Rs. 115 crore, Astrotalk recorded revenue of Rs. 282 crore for the fiscal year that ended in March 2023. The business projects that, at its present run rate, it will generate over Rs. 100 crore in net profit on Rs. 600 crore in revenue in FY24 (Roy S., October 2023, The Economic Times). According to Pew Research Centre based in Washington, D.C among Indians, only 44% hold the concept that a person's life events could be influenced by the positions of planets and stars in space. Nonetheless, according to 83% of Indians, important dates are chosen based on auspicious days or hours. This indicates a mix of beliefs in India, with a significant portion relying on astrology for timing important events despite not fully subscribing to its broader influence on life events. Despite a nuanced perception, as indicated by *Pew Research Centre* data, the cultural significance of choosing auspicious dates remains prevalent among Indians. According to the Global Astrology Market Report 2023, released by Research and Markets, the astrology market was valued at \$12.8 billion in 2021, and is estimated to reach \$22.8 billion by 2031, growing

at a CAGR of 5.7% from 2022 to 2031. The report mentions that several astrology-based startups have reported 10% to 30% growth, and online applications have surpassed one million downloads on Google Play Store.

**Current Landscape and Research Insights:** The impact of social media on astrology cannot be overstated, with platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube emerging as central hubs for astrological material. This study seeks to explore the profound influence of astrology on the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours of Indian youth, focusing on its impact on decision-making processes and lifestyle choices. The research process reveals that a significant portion of youth engage with astrology content on social media for entertainment and seeks guidance, with a notable trust in the accuracy of predictions or advice provided by astrologers. In the contemporary landscape of social media-connectedness, this study aims to shed light on the evolving significance of astrology in the lives of Indian youth. It delves into the factors contributing to its appeal, the role of social media in shaping opinions, and emerging trends in consumption patterns. Through an examination of horoscopes, birth charts, and astrological advice, the study focuses on how young individuals make life choices based on astrological information, exploring the emotional and cognitive effects. The ultimate objective is to gather valuable insights into the shifting perspectives and the evolving validity of astrology among the younger demographic in India.

#### **Aim:**

This research aims to investigate how Indian youth perceive and engage with astrology content on social media. Through specific research objectives, the study aims to uncover evolving attitudes toward astrology and its validity among India's youth.

#### **Objectives:**

The objectives of the research are to:

- determine the factors that influence youth's engagement with astrology content on social media;
- examine how astrology content on social media impacts the decision-making process and lifestyle choices of youth in India;

- compare the most popular astrology platforms on social media for content consumption among the youth in India;
- assess the most commonly consumed forms of astrology content on social media, such as horoscopes, birth charts, and astrological advice;
- summarise astrologers' motivations behind creating and curating astrology content on social media.

#### **Hypotheses:**

The hypotheses of the research are as follows:

- Varied factors, including curiosity, cultural influence, and accessibility, significantly impact youth's astrology engagement.
- Astrology content on social media plays a substantial role in shaping youth decisions and lifestyle choices.
- There are significant differences in popularity and user preferences among various astrology platforms on social media.
- Specific forms of astrology content, such as horoscopes and birth charts, are more popular among youth on social media.
- Astrologers' motivations for social media content creation vary, encompassing impact, convenience, and efficiency.

#### **Review of Literature:**

Pınarbaşı, G. (2021). Mass media and astrology as a reflection of the culture industry. *Psychology Research on Education and Social Sciences*, 2(2), 83-93.

Schiller underscores media's consciousness impact and individualism's commodification. Pınarbaşı explores astrology's media integration, revealing societal influence. Adorno traces astrology's dual rise in personal and mass consumption. Teissier critiques media-driven "commercial astrology" as a transformative force. The research underscores media's role in perpetuating cultural narratives via astrology in the culture industry.

Vyas, J. (2020). *A Relevant Interrelationship between Media and Astrology: A Critique*.

This research delves into the intersection of social media and astrology, focusing on evolving methods of predicting future outcomes through data analysis. It navigates the complexities, potentials, and challenges of utilizing social media data for forecasting, catering to a diverse audience and aiming to foster discussions on promises, pitfalls, and strategies in this realm.

Sugarman, H., Impey, C., Buxner, S., & Antonellis, J. (2011). Astrology beliefs among undergraduate students. *Astronomy Education Review*, 10(1).

This study explores astrology's prevalence and impact in Western society, analyzing its influence on media, dating, and politics. Despite assumptions linking pseudoscience to low scientific literacy, limited research examines student beliefs. Surveying 10,000 undergraduates, the study aims to unveil the correlation between astrology belief and scientific literacy, illuminating educational implications.

**Methodology:**

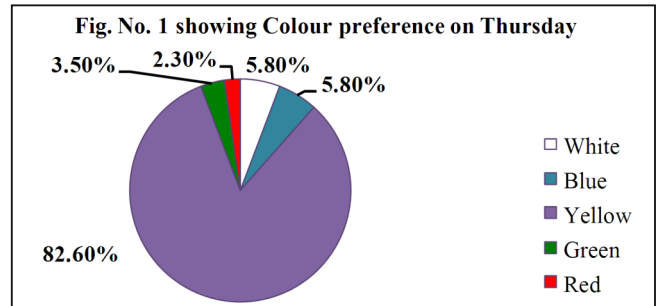
This study employs a mixed-methods research approach to delve into the consumption patterns of astrology among Indian youth on social media. Utilising both quantitative and qualitative data, the research provides a comprehensive understanding.

Triangulation method has been used for data collection, employing a Google Form questionnaire with 23 questions targeting a diverse sample of Indian youth aged 15-29 (defined as youth in the National Youth Policy, 2014, Government of India). The questionnaire, pretested for effectiveness, gathered 86 responses. Semi-structured interviews with two prominent astrologers further enriched the exploration of astrology's role in social media. This multifaceted study contributes to a refined comprehension of youth, social media, and astrology.

**Data Analysis:**

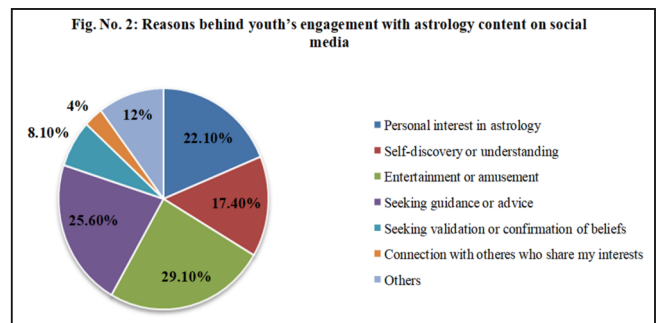
A convenience sample strategy has been used for the online survey, in which respondents who fit the requirements were requested to participate. The survey's quantitative data has been coded and entered into Microsoft Excel for further analysis.

**Colour preference on Thursday**



The data presented in Fig. 1 indicates a high awareness among the youth surveyed regarding the preferred colour (yellow) to be worn on Thursdays, aligning with astrological beliefs. This suggests a strong connection between astrology and daily practices, underscoring the relevance of screening participants based on their awareness for a comprehensive study on Astrology on Social Media.

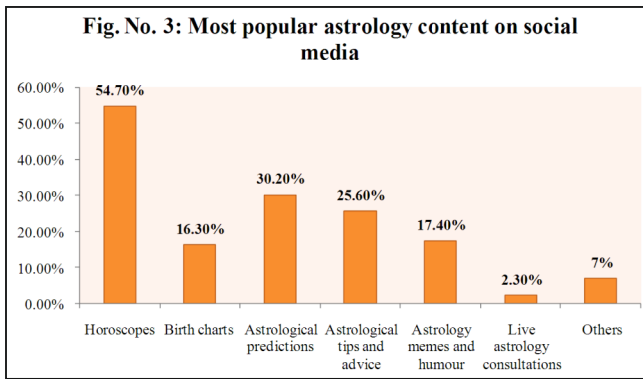
**Reasons behind youth's engagement with astrology content on social media**



In Fig. 2, depicting reasons for youth engagement with astrology content, entertainment (29.1%) emerges as the primary motivator, followed closely by seeking guidance or advice (25.6%). This signifies a notable contradiction, showcasing a blend of serious and non-serious reasons driving youth engagement with astrology on social media. The contrast of entertainment and guidance underscores the diverse motivations within this demographics' interaction with astrological content. The responders were free to select more than one option.

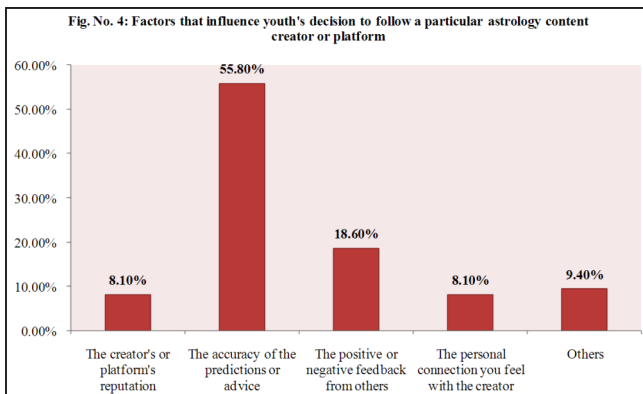


**Most popular astrology content on social media**



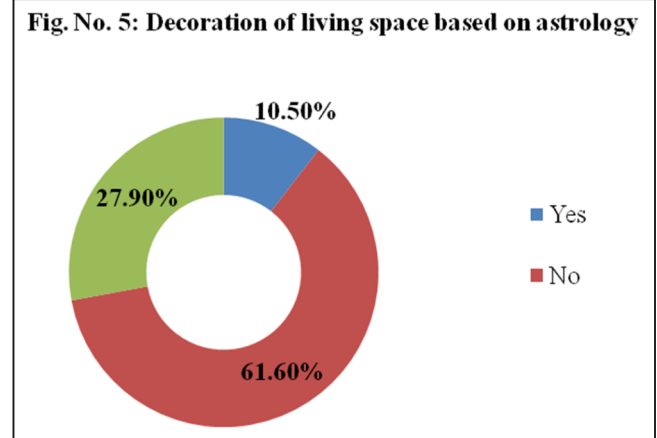
In Fig. 3, the most preferred astrology content on social media is evident. Horoscopes lead with 47 responses, while live astrology consultations have only 2. This highlights a distinct preference among youth for easily digestible content like horoscopes and astrology memes over more involved forms, indicating a clear inclination towards accessible and quick astrological information rather than engaging in live consultations. The responders were free to select more than one option.

**Factors that influence youth's decision to follow a particular astrology content creator or platform**



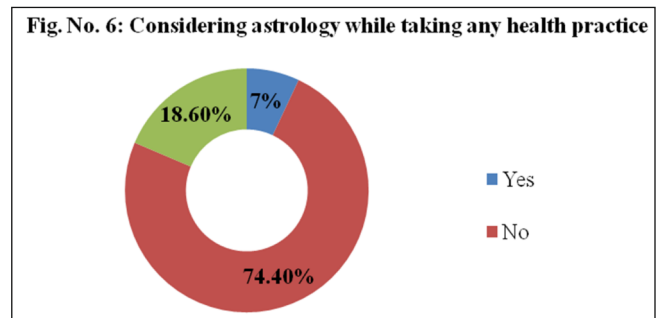
In Fig. 4, the key factors guiding youth's choice of astrology content creators or platforms are unveiled. Accuracy of predictions or advice takes precedence, closely trailed by the impact of positive and negative feedback from others. This underscores the pivotal role of content quality and the influence of social validation in shaping the decisions of the youth when engaging with astrology content on specific platforms or from particular creators.

**Decoration of living space based on astrology**

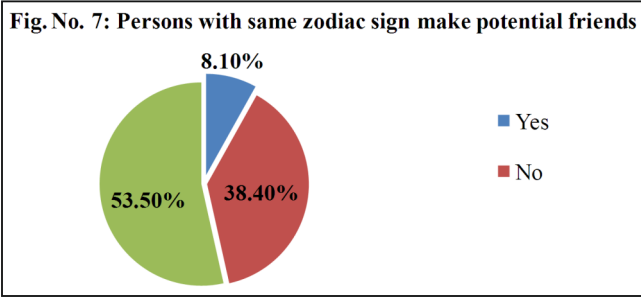


In Fig. 5, the influence of astrology on the decoration of youth's living space is examined. A majority, 61.6%, indicate that their decoration decisions are not guided by astrology. Conversely, 38.4% express a direct correlation between their zodiac sign or astrological preferences and their choices in decorating their living space. This suggests a varied approach among youth, with a notable portion integrating astrology into their aesthetic decisions.

**Considering astrology while taking any health practice**

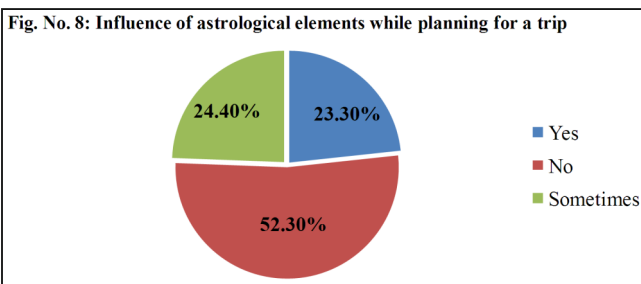


In Fig. 6, the analysis indicates that a substantial majority, 74.4%, of youth do not factor astrology into their health practices. Only a minimal percentage, 7%, explicitly considers astrology in their health decisions, while 18.6% acknowledge occasional influence. This underscores that, generally, astrology holds limited sway over the health-related choices of the surveyed youth.



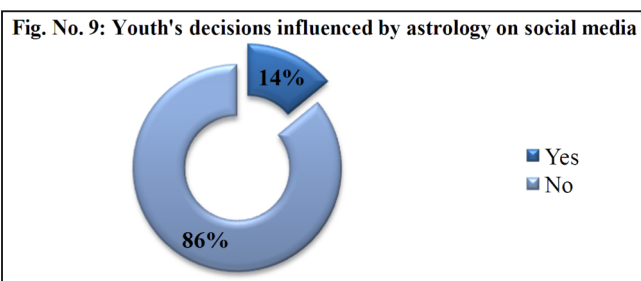
In Fig. 7, the analysis indicates that a majority, 53.5%, of youth don't have a specific stance on whether persons with the same zodiac signs make potential friends. Only a small percentage, 8.1%, believes in this compatibility, while 38.4% reject the notion. This suggests that, for most youth, potential friendships are not determined by zodiac sign alignment.

**Influence of astrological elements while planning for a trip**



In Fig. 8, the analysis reveals that while 23.3% of youth consider astrological elements like auspicious dates or destinations in trip planning, a majority (52.3%) do not. Additionally, 24.4% occasionally factor in astrological elements. This indicates a varied approach among respondents in integrating astrology into their travel plans.

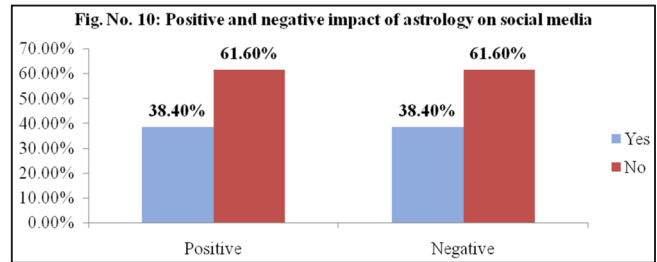
**Youth's decisions influenced by astrology on social media**



In Fig. 9, the analysis highlights that only 14% of respondents acknowledge astrology on social media

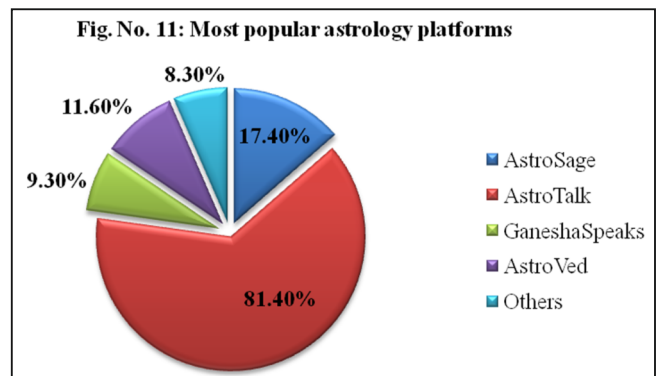
influencing their decisions, like purchases or chore planning. Conversely, a significant majority (86%) assert that social media astrology has never impacted their decisions, indicating a limited sway over the youth's choices.

**Positive and negative impact of astrology on social media**



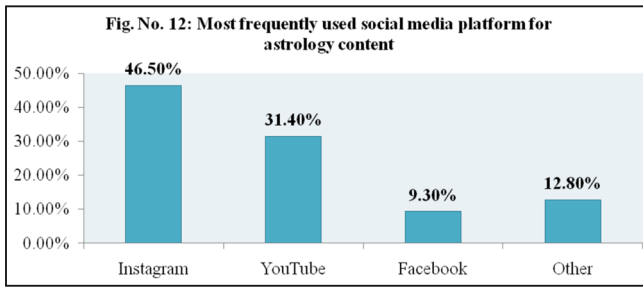
In Fig. 10, the analysis indicates that 61.6% of respondents believe astrology on social media has a neutral impact. Conversely, 38.4% recognize both positive and negative influences, citing examples of motivation and self-understanding, but also expressing concerns about over-reliance, superstition, and potential negative impacts on decision-making.

**Most popular astrology platforms**



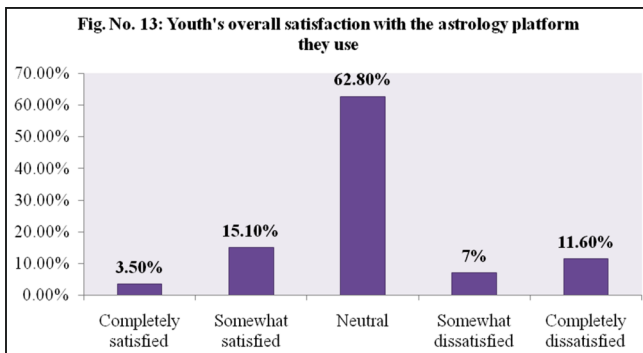
In Fig. 11, the analysis reveals that AstroTalk dominates as the most popular astrology platform among youth, with 81.4% respondents having awareness of it. In contrast, AstroSage lags significantly with only 17.4% responses, emphasizing AstroTalk's clear prominence and popularity among the surveyed youth in India.

### Most frequently used social media platform for astrology content



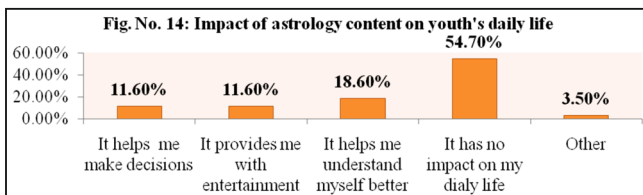
In Fig. 12, the analysis indicates that Instagram is the preferred platform for consuming astrology content, with 46.5% of respondents using it most frequently. YouTube follows with 31.4%, and Facebook lags behind at 9.3%. This underscores Instagram's clear dominance as the primary social media platform for astrology content consumption among Indian youth.

### Youth's overall satisfaction with the astrology platform they use



In Fig. 13, the analysis reveals that a minimal 3.5% of respondents express complete satisfaction with their astrology platform, while 11.6% express complete dissatisfaction. Surprisingly, a significant 62.8% maintain a neutral stance, indicating a prevalent ambivalence or lack of strong sentiments among the surveyed youth regarding their astrology platforms.

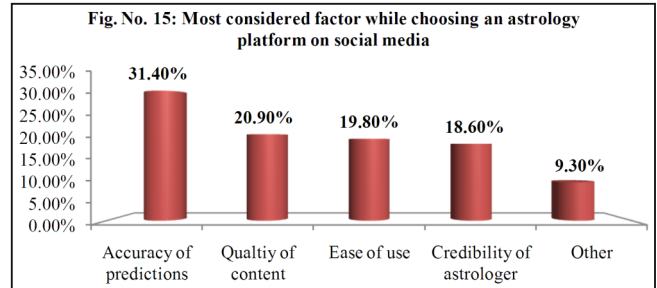
### Impact of astrology content on youth's daily life



In Fig. 14, the analysis unveils a contradiction with 54.7% asserting no impact of astrology on daily life.

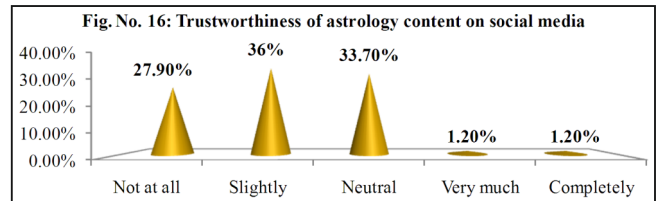
Notably, an equal 11.6% find both serious (decision-making) and non-serious (entertainment) impacts. Additionally, 18.6% state that astrology aids self-understanding. Overall, a substantial portion sees no influence from astrology content on their daily lives.

### Most considered factor while choosing an astrology platform on social media



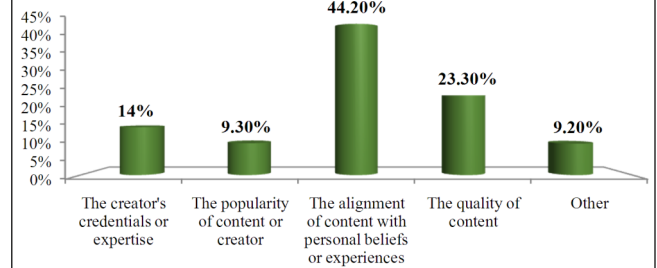
In Fig. 15, the analysis indicates that accuracy of predictions holds the highest priority, with 31.4% respondents considering it the most crucial factor when choosing an astrology platform. Surprisingly, this surpasses the significance of the astrologer's credibility, emphasizing the paramount importance youth place on the predictive accuracy of the content provided by the platform.

### Trustworthiness of astrology content on social media



In Fig. 16, only 1.2% completely trust astrology content on social media, while 27.9% have no trust. A substantial 33.7% remain neutral, indicating a lack of complete trust among Indian youth in astrology content on social media platforms.

### Factors considered when evaluating the credibility of astrology content



In Fig. 17, the analysis reveals that 44.2% of youth prioritize the alignment of astrology content with

personal beliefs and experiences when assessing credibility. This surpasses considerations like the creator's expertise and content or creator popularity, which received 14% and 9.3% responses respectively, underscoring the strong influence of personal resonance in credibility assessment.

#### **EXPERTS' OPINIONS:**

Qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews has been subjected to thematic analysis as per the major variable identified during the data-collection process. This approach involves identifying recurring themes, patterns, and meanings within the data to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' perspectives on astrology consumption on social media.

**Motivation for Social Media Astrology:** Dr. Kiran Tripathi's motivation stems from a desire for sustained impact, foreseeing potential physical limitations in the future. In contrast, Dr. Acharya P. Sanjay values the convenience of reaching a wide audience without physical limitations, highlighting the efficiency and accessibility of social media for sharing astrological insights.

**Type of Astrology Content Shared:** One interviewee emphasises idealistic topics, steering clear of superstition and relying on personal experience and Vedic descriptions. The other concentrates on the broader impact, delving into how planetary positions influence both national and international affairs, showcasing a diverse range in the types of astrology content shared.

**Measuring Success on Social Media:** One interviewee measures success through direct engagement, focusing on likes and personal feedback received via calls. In contrast, the other employs a comprehensive approach, considering likes, shares, comments, and the acquisition of new clients to measure success on social media.

**Reasons for Astrology Content Consumption by Youth in India:** One interviewee attributes the youth's interest to a curiosity about destiny and fate. On the contrary, the other highlights easy accessibility and the aspiration to derive benefits as key reasons for astrology content consumption by the youth in India, reflecting diverse motivations within this demographic.

**Challenges in Content Creation:** One interviewee copes with unusual questions, while the other finds challenges in staying current with trends and maintaining the balance between informative and engaging content creation.

**Advice for Aspiring Astrologers:** Both interviewees caution aspiring astrologers against promoting superstition. One advises avoiding weird and unnecessary remedies, while the other warns against providing vague predictions or advice that could harm the reputation of astrology.

#### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, this research provides a fine understanding of the complex relationship between Indian youth, astrology, and social media. The resurgence of astrology, particularly on digital platforms, reflects a complex interplay between tradition and modernity in contemporary India. The findings highlight the diverse motivations driving youth engagement, with a simultaneous search of entertainment and guidance. The preference for easily digestible content like horoscopes on platforms such as Astro Talk signifies a shift in consumption patterns, emphasising accessibility and quick information.

Social media's role as a transformative force in reshaping astrological practices is evident, with Instagram emerging as the preferred platform. The expert opinions collected from semi-structured interviews offer valuable insights into the motivations and challenges faced by astrologers in navigating the digital landscape. However, the research also acknowledges the limitations, such as the narrow age focus and sample size, emphasising the need for cautious interpretation.

The study underscores the need for policymakers and social scientists to consider the evolving dynamics of astrology in the digital age. It contributes valuable insights into the factors influencing decision-making and lifestyle choices among Indian youth. As social media continues to play a central role in disseminating astrological content, understanding these dynamics becomes crucial for both scholars and practitioners.



In essence, this research illuminates the complex tapestry of beliefs, preferences, and challenges surrounding astrology on social media, offering a comprehensive picture of its impact on the lives of Indian youth. The study encourages further exploration into the intersection of tradition and technology, providing a foundation for future inquiries into the ever-changing dynamics of cultural practices in the digital era.

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