

Decreasing Patience in Humans: Causes, Effects, and the Way Forward

HariPrasad Lamsal, PhD

Article Type: Research Article

Secretary, Government of Nepal, Ministry of Youth and Sports

Received: 03 September 2025; Revised: 05 November 2025; Accepted: 12 December 2025

**Corresponding email: lamsalhl@hotmail.com*

ISSN: 2822-1648 (Print)

Abstract

Humans, who were once able to wait for news of loved ones for a long time, are now anxious to receive information within minutes and seconds. Technology may contribute to this change in human nature, as technology and social media have become an integral part of human life. While their appropriate use can certainly be beneficial, studies and research indicate that excessive and inappropriate use has brought disadvantages to many aspects of human life. Excessive use has not only led to a kind of addiction in many people but has also unnaturally altered human behavior. Is it possible that technology and social media are causing a decline not only in human behavior but also in patience and overall human capability? The main objective of this article is to analyze the changes in human behavior and their effects caused by mobile phones and social media, and to provide suggestions on focusing on their proper use. The article is based on facts obtained from the study and review of secondary materials. Although this explanatory and analytical article has been prepared using this methodology, it does not include facts and data from primary sources. It is believed that the article will be useful for those interested in the use of mobile phones and social media and their effects.

Keywords: Collaboration, concentration, cooperation, human behavior, notification, patience, self-control, social media, technology, tolerance.

Introduction

Due to technology and the market, human lifestyles are becoming extremely competitive and fast-paced. Human behaviors are becoming market-oriented. Social interaction, collaboration, cooperation, tolerance, and patience are decreasing. These and similar reasons are profoundly affecting individuals' personal and social lives.

The main objective of this article is to identify the reasons for the decreasing patience in humans, its impact, and possible solutions. For this, books, articles, and studies related to social behavior have been used as a basis, employing an analytical method. A qualitative approach, rather than statistical data, has been used to delve deeper into the social and

psychological aspects of the subject. The limitations of this article are the review of limited documents and the lack of primary data. Nevertheless, this article is expected to provide a clear perspective on the importance of patience in today's society and ways to restore it.

Subject Entry

You must have waited or queued many times at the turning points of your own life, haven't you? During this time, you might have felt restless sometimes. Have you ever had a boring experience while waiting for someone or something?

You might have seen people getting annoyed and restless while waiting in a long queue to see a doctor when a relative is sick. You might have also seen those who make various excuses, wishing they could see the doctor sooner even if their turn is far away. When there is no other option, you might have seen people waiting quietly, too.

Why does a person who can wait or queue when compelled become impatient in a normal situation? Can a person be made patient even in normal circumstances? Or does a person become patient only when compulsion is created?

What kind of psychological state makes a person patient or impatient during the time of waiting or queuing? What kind of thoughts come to the minds of such people? We can look at our own experiences, can't we? Such experiences are probably different for each person. It cannot be said that everyone's behavior and feelings are the same.

Are these issues like waiting, queuing, or being patient only the result of individual thinking, or are other factors also at play?

The Timeline of Patience

Twenty-five to thirty years ago, the only means of contact for people far from home and family was the letter. Although urban areas had facilities like Akashwani (radio) and telephones, letters were the only means of communication in rural areas. In addition to this, people themselves were carriers of news, as they used to bring and take news when traveling from one place to another.

Even the facility of writing or sending letters was not available to everyone. First, the post office was far away, and for some, the task of writing and reading letters had to be done by others. Similarly, it used to take months for news related to the health and other matters of relatives to be exchanged. Some people used to get news about well-being by lighting a lamp. If the lamp burned well, they believed that the relative was not in any trouble. They also used to light a lamp in an oil dish when wishing for the welfare of their relatives. In this way, family members used to wait a long time just for news about well-being.

In a time when people had to face such a situation just to get news about relatives, there was certainly no peace of mind. Nevertheless, people endured it. News continued to be exchanged in human life. More specifically, human life continued with its ups and downs. Generations continued.

In the more distant past of human history, the situation of exchanging news must have been even more difficult. Sudheer Sharma's book "Bhikshu, Byapar ra Vidroha" (Monks, Trade, and Rebellion), published in October 2081 BS (2024 AD), mentions the context where people traveling for the Nepal-Tibet trade would take six months to a year to reach their destination and bring or take news to those residing there. During that time, one had to wait not months, but years, for news of relatives. What kind of feelings must a person waiting for news of relatives have had? Nevertheless, the generation of those who waited and those who were waited for continued. All our generations have gone through such stages. More accurately, human life has reached this point by passing through this very stage.

This human race, which had to wait weeks, months, or years for news, has now descended to fortnights, weeks, days, hours, and ultimately, minutes and seconds. Human patience is declining to such an extent that even the situation of ten years ago feels like a folktale, let alone the distant past. It's not just the patience to hear news that has decreased in people; the same is happening in many aspects of human life. The belief is developing that if someone says something that is not liked, one must immediately retort.

In the 'Adi Parva' of the Mahabharata, there is a dialogue between Ved Vyasa and his mother, Satyawati. When the crisis deepens in Hastinapura, Ved Vyasa advises his mother, Satyawati, to leave the palace and go to the forest. His mother then asks: "Why?" Ved Vyasa replies: "मा शोचः काल एवात्र कारणं सर्वकर्मणाम् । अनागतं न पृच्छेथाः कालो हि परमं बलम् ॥" which means, "Do not grieve, Mother, time alone is the cause of all actions here. Do not ask about the future, for time is the supreme power." The meaning was, "Mother, the answer to all questions should not be sought now; time will answer some of them." The implication is that a person also has to wait. Time itself will reveal everything about some questions. Since Ved Vyasa was a seer of the three times (past, present, and future), he knew all the events that would happen in the future. But he told his mother to wait, which is also the basis for moving human life forward. But now, we and our generations have reached a point where we cannot wait even for a moment anywhere. Why is this happening?

Is there a decline in an individual's capacity to wait or queue in this day and age? Is the tendency to contact momentarily, or the inability to wait even for a moment anywhere, or the habit of not being able to remain patient, being observed because of a decline in human capability? One might argue that it is being used because the opportunity is available. But how is the decreasing human capacity to wait, queue, or be patient affecting other aspects of human life?

How to Understand Patience ?

It has been said that a person needs patience. But what is its real meaning? In practice, "patience" and "dhairyata" (the quality of being patient) are interpreted in various ways. According to the comprehensive Nepali dictionary available on the online app, *dhairya* (patience) is a non-restless or non-eager nature. It is a state of mind free from excitement. It is the mental power, quality, stability, or composure to remain calm without being agitated even in times of crisis and difficulty.

Thus, patience is linked with self-control, tolerance, and stability. An individual cannot expect to get everything he or she desires or wants in life. Success and failure are inherent in everyone's life. Patience is a quality required in both these states, which can help an individual control impulses, focus on problem-solving, and improve relationships. That is why in Eastern philosophy, patience is regarded as a high mental quality that enables an individual or society to peacefully cope with difficulties, delays, or uncomfortable situations.

In the *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*, patience is described as the ability to endure sorrow and happiness equally. If a person can develop such a capacity, they can keep themselves aware and operate in a state of consciousness. However, not everyone may acquire such an ability or be able to develop it all at once.

In Buddhist philosophy, patience means not allowing anger or malice to arise in the face of suffering, pain, insult, or difficult circumstances. Since external circumstances of humans are subject to change, accepting them and keeping the mind stable is patience. Patience is not just tolerance but also a spiritual practice or discipline connected with deep mental stability and compassion.

If an individual is unable to remain conscious, the factors in his or her external environment can become tools that break patience. In this process, many aspects of the individual's surroundings and nature can potentially become factors that diminish patience. For example, the notifications on mobile phones, short videos, and multitasking are now creating a "kinetic attention," meaning repeated shocks in the mind, thereby breaking this patience and concentration. If this shock can be stopped, the individual can lead their mind in the desired and intended direction. This requires commitment, self-discipline, and self-control.

Patience and concentration are interconnected. If the *chitta* (mind/consciousness) can be kept patient, meaning stable, it becomes easier to focus in meditation. When an individual applies themselves patiently to a task, it also means they make continuous efforts. Patience encourages the continuation of practice, from which concentration expands. Patience helps in tolerating and controlling the impulses that arise in the mind. Furthermore, patience also helps in staying focused on long-term goals.

The Importance of Patience in Human Life

As mentioned above, patience is an extremely important quality in a good human life. Because it provides the individual with the mental strength to deal with and face difficulties, challenges, and uncertainties. In its absence, a person may fall into a state of frustration, anger, or despair, which carries a high risk of negatively affecting human life. The practice of patience teaches one to view problems as opportunities, encourages finding solutions over time, and helps maintain harmony in relationships. This facilitates self-control, positive thinking, and ensures long-term success. Ups and downs, happiness and sorrow, are natural in human life. This very patience is the basis for accepting all those conditions and moving forward with a calm mind.

The benefits of patience in human life have been explained from many perspectives. Its importance has been highlighted in both Eastern and Western philosophies. Many studies have also been conducted on this in the Western world. Some examples demonstrating the importance of patience are presented here.

In a study presented by Gloria Mark at the CHI Conference in 2023, 20 years of data (2004–2023) were analyzed and presented on an individual's attention span. According to this study, the average attention span of computer/smartphone users has decreased from 2.5 minutes (150 seconds) to only 47 seconds. According to this study, there has been a 75% decline in the average human attention span over the past 20 years. The average attention was 75 seconds in 2012. Now, human behavior involves switching from one app or task to another every 47 seconds. This tendency in a person's behavior increases stress by 20% and reduces productivity by 30%. It takes 25 minutes for the switching attention to return to a normal state.

According to another study, those who show the patience to wait or hold on in a subject or field are seen to achieve greater success in the long run. In the 1970s, the psychologist Walter Mischel conducted the Marshmallow Experiment at Stanford University, where the self-control and delayed gratification found in children were seen to assist in achieving success in the long run.

In this experiment, Walter selected children aged 4 to 6 for the study. Each child was placed separately in a simple room. In this study, a plate of their favorite candy was placed in front of the children, and they were given one candy in hand and told that if they could wait for 15 minutes without eating it, they would get another candy. It was also said that if they did not wait for 15 minutes and ate the candy in between, they would not be given another one. During the experiment, some children were found to be waiting without eating the first candy. The findings of the study showed that those who could wait for a long time without eating the candy given initially and could wait for the second one achieved success in the long run. It was those with the capacity to wait and exercise self-control who were seen to achieve success later in life.

When an individual's patience decreases, concentration at work cannot be maintained. The mind is compelled to travel quickly here and there. The mind is forced to take itself to different states in a short time. It starts looking at and listening to different subjects. This is called digital distraction. Those who spend a lot of time on mobile phones and social media keep experiencing such digital distractions, which results in mental fatigue, decreased work capacity, strained relationships, and a high risk of hindering the achievement of long-term goals.

Due to this digital distraction, not only is there a lack of concentration in the work an individual is doing and attention is repeatedly disturbed, but the brain is also collecting and processing unnecessary information, which poses a risk of increased anxiety along with high mental fatigue. Due to the tendency like multitasking, proper attention is not paid to a single

task, which leads to higher time consumption, poor quality, and a high probability of errors. Thus, patience holds great importance in personality development.

The Effect of Mobile Phones and Social Media on Patience

Currently, mobile phones and social media are not just means of communication but have become an integral part of people's lifestyles. Consequently, the time spent on such devices is also increasing. The role of the mobile phone is expanding as a supportive tool for shopping, receiving health-related suggestions, and for entertainment and study. Social media plays an important role in connecting people and exchanging information. But the situation is no longer just this. It seems that now, it is not people operating mobile phones and social media, but mobile phones and social media operating people. A kind of addiction has set in among people.

The increasing use of smartphones and social media can be called the demand of the time. But if the increased time is spent looking at unnecessary information or rumors, the person is suffering more harm than benefit. Studies show that excessive use of these is wasting valuable time, attention to the subject matter is decreasing, and patience and social behavior are being negatively affected. Such negative effects may be of different degrees across all age groups.

According to Roberts and David (2019), social media use and online advertisements are affecting people's shopping habits nowadays. Mobile phones and social media are fueling the feeling of FOMO (fear of missing out) in people, which is inspiring them to shop just like others. This is subtly changing people's behavior.

According to Exploding Topics 2025, the average daily mobile usage time in humans has reached 4 hours and 37 minutes, which is a significant increase from previous years. A person checks their mobile phone about 58 times per day. In the context of the USA, children on average receive their first mobile phone at the age of 12. The average American is estimated to spend nearly 12 years of their life looking at a mobile screen. Approximately 52% of Americans feel they are overly dependent on their mobile phones. Similarly, 59% of people use their mobile phones in the toilet, while 27% send messages on their mobile phones when the traffic light is red.

Roberts and David from the University of California studied in 2019 how the use of mobile devices affects people's patience and self-control. The continuous use of mobile technology has affected the dopamine system in the brain, increasing the tendency for people to make impulsive decisions and become intolerant. It has reduced the patience of students.

Jonathan Haidt's 2024 book, *The Anxious Generation*, mentions that the mental health of children born after 2010 has declined due to the excessive use of smartphones and social media. A generation has gone from a play-based childhood to a phone-based childhood. Their excessive use has reduced children's participation in social interaction, their tendency to play independently, and their emotional maturity. It has increased the rates of anxiety and depression.

An article published on November 18, 2025, in *The New York Times International Edition* under the name Brain Chain X (2025), exposed the serious problems brought about by the use of AI. According to this article, the excessive use of social media and Artificial Intelligence (AI) has reduced students' cognitive performance, which some experts have called 'brain rot'. Excessive reliance on AI has brought about a 'frightening' decline in students' performance. According to the findings of a study conducted by JASEA at the Strasensky Institute, which included 3,000 students (aged 14 to 25), students who used social media for more than four hours daily scored lower on reading and memory tests. Excessive reliance on AI and social media is reducing human cognitive capacity and lowering performance, which is 'frightening'.

Jilvung (2025), in *The New York Times International Edition* on Monday, November 17, 2025, mentioned a large amount of cheating that occurred using AI (Artificial Intelligence) in South Korea's prestigious universities. This showed an increase in unethical behavior among students, which has truly become a matter of concern.

Analyzing the data from Exploding Topics 2025 also provides a basis to suggest that people in less developed countries spend even more time on mobile phones and social media. This is because unemployment rates are high in less developed countries, and the regulation system is weak. This may be causing excessive use without restriction at home, in the office, etc. In developed countries, people are busy, so even if they want to, they are obstructed from spending a lot of time on social media. Furthermore, there is more regulation there. Now, in some countries, laws have been made and implemented to ban mobile phone use in schools and for certain age groups.

All age groups in society are being affected by the addiction to mobile phones and social media. Not only the older generation but also Millennials, Alpha, and Beta generations are all being deeply affected by this. According to Jonathan Haidt (2024), children's minds and lifestyles seem to have become digitalized. The tendency not to eat until they listen to a song or music or watch a video on a mobile phone has become common. Parents are also using mobile phones as an easy way to keep their children calm or feed them, and children are seen to be enjoying the digital world more than the real world. Machines are taking the place of interaction among people.

In the context of Nepal, no extensive studies have been conducted on such issues. If a study were to be conducted, the situation here might show something more terrible than what has been stated above. This is because the family and government regulatory systems here are extremely weak. Due to unemployment, they are finding opportunities to spend time on this. There is a growing negative discourse in public life and social media, and the business of despair is on the rise, so much so that it would not be wrong to say that we are in such a state. The foundation of moral education is becoming weak. Many other such reasons may be responsible.

Necessary Actions to Increase Patience

To increase patience in an individual, a personal, social, and legal basis is necessary. Because patience is not just an individual quality; it is also deeply connected with social behavior and legal structures. At the personal level, self-control, positive thinking, and emotional intelligence must be developed. At the social level, family, school, and community must create an environment that encourages tolerance and dialogue. Legally, a foundation must also be established for what should and should not be done, which can control and balance human behavior.

It is not easy to increase patience in an individual. But it is not impossible either. To increase it, first and foremost, the individual needs commitment. It requires discipline. It requires preparation. Mental stability and a positive attitude are needed within the person. The self-will and self-control to control oneself are needed.

Success and failure will inevitably come into everyone's life. Everyone has to endure hardship in their lifetime. The ability to accept such difficulties, failures, or unexpected situations that come into life is the basis of patience. For this, one must be able to develop self-control, the ability to utilize time properly, and the mindset to view problems as opportunities. When a person is able to control their emotions and understand the situation with a calm mind, remaining aware every moment, then patience naturally increases.

Currently, mobile phones and social media have broken human patience. This is not the only reason for decreasing patience. But its role is significant. If we can develop the habit of not using mobile phones and social media more than necessary, it is not difficult to increase patience. This requires a time limit and a work plan to reduce the use of these devices and technology. Attention is needed for tasks that increase concentration; such tasks are what need to be done. For this, immediate practice is needed, and in the long run, discipline is necessary.

To reduce addiction to mobile phones and social media, the individual must first be prepared. They must create their own framework for how to use them. Others can help in this, but the commitment must come from within the individual. One must make some rules for oneself. These must be honestly adhered to.

First of all, one must be clear about when, why, and for how long the mobile phone will be used during the day. A situation where family members monitor each other can also be beneficial. If a code of conduct can be made and implemented for the family, there is no better solution than that. But this issue is not as easy to say as it is to implement. In a time when there is excessive competition in daily life and a flood of despair, frustration, or anger on social media, it may not be easy for an individual to easily create and implement a code of conduct. Again, the infallible solution is to control oneself.

Practices related to digital detox can also be beneficial. For example, not touching the phone as soon as you wake up, staying away from the phone for at least an hour before going to bed, or taking a complete break from online activities one day a week.

Concentration can also be increased by turning off social media notifications on your mobile phone. Additionally, unnecessary apps on the mobile can be removed. Nowadays, apps that limit screen time are also available.

Instead of spending time on social media, one can engage in alternative activities such as meditation, yoga, or reading and writing during free time. Direct dialogue with family and friends can be increased. There are plenty of examples of people reducing addiction by walking when they feel like using their phone.

The most important thing is that the process of reducing such addiction is not possible all at once. It must be **done gradually and patiently**. Practice and time are both required to abandon an existing habit and develop a new one.

Initially, to reduce the habit of spending a long time on social media, one can take breaks in between and do other tasks. A commitment is needed to do other tasks during such breaks. And those tasks should be started immediately during that time. If one starts with small breaks and utilizes them, improvement is possible. If continuity is given to such practice, good results begin to come. But this task is not that easy. This requires individual commitment along with a supportive environment.

The government can make laws and implement them to reduce mobile phone use among children. Some countries have already made and implemented such laws. But effective implementation is not possible without the cooperation of parents. Regarding children, schools and parents must work together. But how to remove the addiction that has set in among parents? There is no other option than for the parents themselves to be ready.

Jonathan Haidt (2024) has argued that the use of smartphones should be banned up to the school level. According to him, it is not time to delay getting children back to play. Digital boundaries can be created and implemented by schools, parents, and the community working together. The time has come to make structural changes for the improvement of children's mental health.

Thus, if parents, schools, teachers, and the government all work together, the addiction to mobile phones and social media can be reduced or lessened. Positive narratives can be increased. Practicing separation from places where there are negative things also helps in focusing attention. Rather than not using mobile phones and social media or shutting them down, the situation can be improved by focusing on their proper use. The home, family, community, school, organizations, and government all have a role and responsibility in this.

Conclusion

In today's world, there is fierce competition in every sector of human life. This has made human lifestyles fast and dynamic. It has brought changes in human lifestyles themselves. However, patience in humans is decreasing. The desire for immediate results, excessive use of technology, and a competitive lifestyle and environment may have weakened human tolerance.

The effect of mobile phones, social media, and technology, in general, has been felt from personal mental health to social relationships. Stress, dissatisfaction, and aggression are increasing among excessive users. Patience is decreasing. The lack of it, along with weakening decision-making capacity, is increasing the possibility of reduced commitment to long-term goals.

Now it seems that human patience must be restored. This requires personal commitment, as well as social and legal provisions. At the personal level, it is necessary to adopt meditation, time management, and positive thinking in one's lifestyle. At the social level, it is necessary to re-establish practices that increase social interaction, cooperation, collaboration, and tolerance. Legally, something immediate also needs to be done.

Patience is not just an individual quality; it is the foundation for collective progress. Therefore, giving renewed priority to patience and balancing life is the right way forward now.

Authors' ORCID iD

Hariprasad Lamsal: <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-3382-8197>

References

- Brain, Chain X. (2025, November 18). To avoid 'brain rot,' try using your brain. (Tuesday, November 18, 2025). *The New York Times International Edition*.
- Exploding Topics. (2025). *Average screen time statistics: How much time do people spend on their phones?*
- Haidt, J. (2024). *The anxious generation: How the great rewiring of childhood is causing an epidemic of mental illness*. Penguin Press.
- <https://explodingtopics.com/blog/smartphone-usage-stats>
- Mark, G. (2023, April 23–28). *How our attention spans have changed over 20 years: From 150 seconds to 47 seconds* [Conference presentation]. Proceedings of the CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '23), Hamburg, Germany. ACM. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3544548.3580689>
- Mischel, W., & Ebbesen, E. B. (1970). Attention in delay of gratification. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 16(2), 329–337. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0029815>

- Roberts, J. A., & David, M. E. (2019). *Smartphone use and the loss of patience: Examining the effects of mobile technology on self-control*. Department of Psychological Science, University of California, Irvine.
- Sharma, S. (2081). भिक्षु, व्यापार र विद्रोह: नेपालको भोट-चीन सम्बन्ध र भारत । काठमाडौं: किताब पब्लिकेसन. ISBN: 978-9937-9492-7-9.
- Veda Vyāsa. (n.d.). *Mahābhārata: Śānti Parva* (Adhyāya 70, Śloka 6). Retrieved from <https://mahabharata-online.github.io/sanskrit/12/70.html> [mahabharat....github.io]
- Yilvung, J. (2025, November 17). AI powers mass cheating in South Korea. *The New York Times International Edition*.

Note: The author acknowledges the use of OpenAI ChatGPT for final drafting and editing support. The tool was used for refining languages/ensuring clarity and coherence in the article. The contributions made by ChatGPT helped enhance the overall quality of this work.