**Social networking: then and now.**

What’s the first thing that comes to your mind when I say social networking? Facebook? Twitter? Whatsapp?

Well ask the same thing to your grandmom. Or mom even. They’d say something quite different. Well obviously ! They’re from a different time you’d say. Yet, the varied reactions to this concept are quite beyond belief.

The other day when I got back from college my grandmom brought up this topic about a certain relative of mine, who apparently lived in the states and was getting married here, in Bangalore.

“Keep yourself free on the 23rd, we’re going to pinky’s wedding. Finally, after seeing some 10-20 grooms they got a boy for her itseems!She is almost 25. About time. He has a job in some company abroad and earns well I heard. I bet they never told the boy she flunked a year in school!”

“Who’s ‘pinky’?”

Who the hell holds on to their pet names beyond age 10? *Pinky*? Really? What, does she blush all the time or something?And this a 25 year old we’re talking about.

“ Bunty aunty’s daughter!! She came to your 12th birthday remember? It seems Bunty can’t stop talking about where they are planning to send pinky for her honeymoon! Some place in England it seems, *paras*.. or something.. ”

“ hahaaha.. its Paris *Ajji*. But *ajji*, there were nearly 200 people you had invited home that day. How will I remember who *bunty* aunty is?”

Their family has a history with weird pet names or what?

“*arre*! You know Varsha right? Your Himesh uncle’s second cousin? *Arre* she married again know, after 3 years of divorce!”

“Yeah sort of, I just know she exists. I mean, I’ve seen her like once or twice..”

“Yeah her. Her brother-in-law is there know? Keshav? He lives in Chennai with his elder sister, not the one with the long hair ! the one with the curly short hair. Reema? You remember”

“I don’t know whom your talking about *ajji*, but go on.. “

“ Yeah so Reema’s husband is there know? Jeetu uncle. He has a cycle? Itseems they have plans of closing it, retirement age know.. His first cousin is only Bubbly aunty! And her daughter Pallavi is only Pinky ! They are all your relatives ! You should know them!”

Social networking.

Hell I don’t even know some of my classmates in college, and my reason for it is that there are nearly a 100 people! How will I know all of them? And most of the ones I do know and recognizei are via facebook!

While in front of me is a 70 year old lady, who doesnot even know what facebook means. Hell, she doesn’t even know what internet means! This so called ‘pinky’ doesn’t live in the same city, same country we live in, she isn’t one of my grand mother’s ‘friends’, isn’t of the same ‘age group’, does not go to the same ‘college/workplace’ as my grandmother nor does she have a great many ‘mutual friends’ either. Yet, my *ajji* knows her entire biodata!

On the other hand, in the age of technology with all the great many social platforms that I happen to share with ‘pinky’, I go check on my facebook account. Guess what? She’s my friend. With 32 mutual friends. Yeah, social networking my foot.

If the you and the person you’re probably chatting with right now got off of Facebook or Twitter or Whatsapp and met for a coffee at a nearby hotel if feasible, you’d probably get to know each other better. Hell, you’d actually become friends. And not just digitally I mean.

*Ajji* didn’t need any of this to know her entire family tree. Infact, back when she was my age, they didn’t even have telephones to talk to each other. Everyone met up with each other as much as possible. Even if they were busy with ‘work’ or didn’t have the ‘time’. They valued conversations. They valued talking. Face to face. They didn’t have to rely on ‘find a friend’ on Facebook to meet new people. They just had to talk. We on the other hand can’t handle a decent conversation without switching on laptops or cell phones.

If my *ajji* were to take classes on networking and public relations, she’d have made it as a Harvard professor in management.

That’s about social networking, then. And now.