

ABSTRACT

Technological advancement is helping mankind to live a better life. Internet being one of the best examples of technological advancement is a boon to society. The present research aimed to study the extent of internet usage by married women of Vadodara city for performing their household responsibilities. The study covered their household responsibilities, internet usage patterns, their experiences while using the internet and the problems faced by them while using the internet. The population of the study comprised of married women of Vadodara city. The sample was 350 married women of Vadodara city, who were using the internet. The sample of the study was selected through purposive and snowball techniques. However, the data was collected through both qualitative and quantitative methods. A structured questionnaire was used to collect the quantitative data whereas an interview schedule was used to collect qualitative data. The data were analyzed using different statistical measures viz ANOVA, Posthoc, Intensity Indices.

The findings of the study revealed that the majority of the married women had at least one personal gadget whereas more than forty percent of them were sharing laptops with their family members. Half of the married women had low monthly monetary expenditure for internet recharge. More than one-third of them were spending very less hours daily on the internet (36%). A high majority of them were using a mobile phone to access the internet and were using Wifi connection for the same. Higher percentages of married women were using the internet most of the time for WhatsApp (4.59), Facebook (3.85) Higher percentages of married women were light internet user in terms of their internet usage pattern (43.70%). There were significant differences in monthly monetary expenditure on internet recharge by married women in relation with their income group. Married women

from higher income group had high expenditure on monthly internet recharge in comparison to those who belonged to low middle income group and middle income group respectively. There were significant differences in time spent on the internet by married women in relation with their age group, income group, the number of children and years of marriage. Those who were young mothers and recently married, belonged to higher income group and had a single child were spending more time on the internet in comparison to those who were middle age and older mothers, married since a long time, belonged to lower middle as well as middle income group and had two or three children respectively.

A very high majority of the married women had more household responsibilities related to kitchen management (91.4%), child care management (79.69%), home management (92%), finance management (86.8%), social and entertainment management (83.7%). There was a significant difference in overall household responsibilities performed by married women in relation with their income group. Married women belonged to the middle-income group had more household responsibilities in comparison to those who belonged to lower middle-income group and higher income group respectively.

The findings of the study also revealed that the internet was used to a moderate extent by married women for performing their household responsibilities. Internet usage for household responsibilities was high for socializing and entertainment related household responsibilities whereas it was moderate for kitchen management and child care management related household responsibilities. There were significant differences in usage of internet for overall household responsibilities performed by married women in relation with their age, years of marriage, type of internet user, and experience of using the internet. Married women who were- younger mothers, recently married, heavy internet user, had a single child and good experiences of using internet showed high usage of internet for performing household responsibilities. The findings also indicated that married

women had overall fair experiences while using the internet. A higher percentage of married women (37.50%) did not face any problem while using the internet. A little less than forty percent (39.40%) of them faced more personal problems whereas little more than one third (35.69%) of them faced more technical problems. The qualitative findings also reflected the use of the internet by married women for kitchen management, childcare, finance management and socialization and entertainment related household responsibilities. Married women suggested to have a training session on the effective use of the internet for performing household responsibilities. The findings of the study highlighted the varied use of the internet for the performance of household responsibilities.

Internet had become the major source of information and platform to bridge for communication among the Indian households. It is a medium of quick communication between the family members, friends, and colleagues and also with the experts. It also supported the economic development of the nation by providing the facilities for e-commerce and e-learning. It is understood that education, computer, as well as internet handling skills and exposure to technology, play an important role in increasing the functional use of the internet. The present findings highlighted the training needs related to computer and internet usage of married women. That was emerged out from their low to moderate internet usage despite having access of it. The training for using the internet and computer may enable women to make the best use of the internet to perform their household responsibilities. The educational institution, government, as well as a non-government organization, may take initiative to design and implement successful training programmes for women on the functional use of the internet. These training programmes will also support the digital India initiative of Government of India. Such programmes will help India to achieve greater heights by making women comfortable with technology that may enhance empowerment among them.