

Avani Maniar
Leena Chauhan

Internet Altering Indian Households

Enabling Indian Housewives
Perform Household Responsibilities



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INTERNET NETWORK

Internet: A boon

The internet has transformed the world of computer and communication with its unique power to connect with people from anywhere on the globe. Scholars believe that the earlier inventions like the telegraph, the telephone, the radio, and the computer had provided a platform for internet by integration of its capabilities. It has made world-wide broadcasting possible, eased up information dissemination and also function as a channel for collaboration and interaction between the people without any geographical barriers. It is considered one of the successful inventions in today's information and technological world. The impact of the internet is not only restricted to the technical field but also affected the whole world. The Internet's history is complex and involves many aspects - technological, organizational, and community. The technological aspects include the performance and functionality of the internet whereas the organizational aspects include the operation and management of the internet. The community aspect is a social aspect that builds a community of internet users who creates and expands the technology. Another aspect is the commercialization of the internet. (Leiner et al., 1997)

It is not wrong to say that the internet has broadened the horizon of communication and provided advanced facilities to its users in comparison to other media. Devices like mobile phones, computers, and laptops are required to access the internet. The users should have one of these devices and also the internet connections to access it. The growing need of internet at every sphere of life and increasing number of internet users are pressurizing the service providers like telecom companies and mobile phone as well as the computer manufacturing companies to provide internet access in budget-friendly prices. It has connected the whole world and eased up everybody's life. It has given new prospects of expanding the knowledge of individuals and became a helping hand to internet users' viz. students, professionals, businessmen etc. Students can learn new things on the internet. E-learning has become an emerging trend in higher education all over the world. Apart from e-learning, individuals can also consult experts like doctors, scientists, psychologist, agriculturist, astrologists and so on. Not only the learning and expertise, but the internet has also provided a platform for artists like writers, singers, actors to showcase their skills and art. The Internet has a wide scope for its users to use it. Internet should

be accessed used securely and safely to gain quality experiences. It is definitely a boon for the society but only if accessed and used properly.

Brief History of the Internet

The internet was first used in 1969 when a team of defence engineers at the University of Los Angeles-California (UCLA) sent the first instant message via computer to another team thousands of miles away at Stanford University. The first nod of ARPANET (Advance Research Project Agency Network) was set up by defence engineers in the UCLA. It was funded by the Department of Defenses' Advance Research Projects Agency (DARPA) in order to connect the large computer systems to share software, information and storage space. In 1974 the term "Internet" first appeared in print by DARPA. It was the time when universities, science centers, and army installations started connecting through the internet. Later in the year 1983, The Domain Name System (DNS) was invented. It is a system that translates the domain names into IP (internet protocol) address. In 1985, The National Science Foundation (NSF) funded construction of Arpanet's biggest upgrade the NSFNET. It was a command hub of five supercomputers to serve as highways for all data traffic. NSFNET could transmit data at 56 kilobits per second. The 'World Wide Web' was made up by Tim Berners-Lee in 1990. He invented HTML and a text browser, as well as a hypertext graphical user interface (GUI) browser. Then he established the first successful communication between a Hypertext Transfer Protocol client and a server via the Internet. These led to the invention of Web pages. However, 1994, Jeff Bezos founded Amazon that brought the revolutionary world of e-commerce. In the year 1995 NSF stopped funding the Internet altogether and hence it became a complete self-sustaining industry (Intetics Inc., July 2014). This was the year when the Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited, India launched internet in India. After a decade the social media revolution ignited with the launch of Facebook and YouTube. In India, people started using the internet over personal computers at their home and internet cafes. In 2007 the mobile technology hit the telecommunication world and by then the internet was available over wireless signals. Since 2008 mobile internet revolution had begun in India with GSM (2G), later the upgraded 3G data services were made available by private telecom companies in the year 2013-2015 and now the 4G data services are available at affordable prices. The following is the brief history of the internet at a glance-

Internet The Journey

1969	A team of defence engineers at the University of Los Angeles-California (UCLA) sent the very first instant message through the computer to another team sitting thousands of miles away at Stanford University.
1974	The word “Internet” first appeared in print. Universities, science centers, and army installations got connected through the internet.
1983	The Domain Name System (DNS) was invented.
1985	The National Science Foundation (NSF) funded construction of the NSFNET. It was a command hub of five supercomputers to serve as highways for all data traffic. NSFNET could transmit data at 56 kilobits per second.
1990	Tim Berners-Lee invented HTML and a text browser, as well as a hypertext graphical user interface (GUI) browser. Web Pages came into existence. The term “World Wide Web.” was coined.
1991	Commercial enterprises were allowed to use the Internet for the first time.
1994	A whole new world of e-commerce was born with Amazon
1995	Internet became a completely self-sustaining industry. Java language was developed. Internet launched in India by VSNL.
1998	Google opened its first office
2004-2005	The social-media revolution had begun with the launch of Facebook (in December 2004) and YouTube (in the year 2005). By 2005 India had 200,000 cyber cafes to access the internet.
2006	“Cloud Computing” was introduced by Google.
2007	Internet was available through wireless technology. Mobile and smartphones technologies went commercial and grew rapidly.
2009	Mobile data traffic exceeded voice traffic every single month. “Check in” at locations all over the world started. WhatsApp was launched and brought the revolution in instant messaging.
2010	Registered domains number reached 200 million. Apple launches iPad. 4G wireless networks launched in the US. Instagram and Pinterest launched.
2013 – 15	Apple Watch was launched. Mobile Internet surpasses desktop. 3G Data Service made available in India.
2016	Reliance Jio launched 4G data service at affordable and lowest price.
2017	The rapid growth of Internet users with more than 481 million internet users by the end of 2017.

(Sharma, July 2016; Internet Society, 2015; Intetics Inc., July 2014)

Use of Internet for Different Purposes

The Internet is today one of the most important parts of our daily life. There are large numbers of things that can be done using the internet and so it is very important. Today internet is used for different purposes depending upon the requirement.

1. Communication

The most popular thing for which internet is used is to communicate with the people. It has allowed people to communicate not only through text but also through their voice and face to face via voice calling and video calling respectively. It has become very easy to contact the loved ones from any part of the world. Therefore it can be said that communication is the most precious gift from the internet to its users. People commonly use it for emailing, connecting through social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.

2. Education and Research

Education is one of the best things that the internet can provide. There are a number of books, reference books, online help centers, expert's views and other study oriented material on the internet that can make the learning process very easier as well as a fun learning experience. There are virtual classrooms from which one can learn the specific topic. There are a vast variety of tutorials available on the internet using which one can learn different topics easily anywhere-anytime. Education through the internet is the best use of it. Reviewing is the most important part of the research. With the help of the internet, researchers can avail the facility of reviewing publications and research papers online. There are different search engines, gateways, and e-libraries, which allow researchers to have access to research papers related to their concerned topic. Earlier it was really a difficult job for researchers to collect reviews but now with the blessing of the internet, it is just a click away. Through the internet, a researcher can also publish their research work so that common mass can avail its benefits.

3 E-Commerce

Apart from communication, education, and research, another important use of the internet is for the financial transaction. With the time and growth of internet financial transactions like shopping, payment of bills viz. electricity, phone credit card etc., taxes, booking movie tickets, making reservation in railways, roadways or airways for travelling, booking of hotels, money

transfer, loan payments, insurance premium payments etc. has become easy and quick for all of us. This feature of the internet enables people to purchase or sell items online easily. It has reduced the time and energy of human beings spent on shopping and other financial transactions.

4. Real-Time Updates

The Internet provides recent updates of everything happening around the world. With its feature to share the information, it allows its users to get a real-time update as well. Through this one can get news and other happenings that may be on-going in different parts of the world. There are numerous websites from where one can access real-time updates in every field viz. business, sports, finance, politics, entertainment, and others.

5. Getting Information about any topic

The Internet is huge information about any topic we need. it is very commonly used among people for searching for information about anything viz. any location, product, fashion, people, institute, hotel, animal or any unknown object or thing. It has information about almost everything we need. This may be helpful to people who are searching for it. People use the internet before buying any product to get its reviews. They even read reviews before going to watch any movie. It provides guidance to its users for anything which they review.

6. Advertising and Publicity

Similarly like publishing anything on the internet it is also easy to advertise any product on the internet. One can use the internet to advertise various products. There are so many internet users to whom one can advertise the product. The Internet has the facility of reaching different strata of audience accordingly, viz. one can advertise beauty products to women, sports products to players etc. One may use the multimedia capabilities of the internet to make available product specification sheets, audio files, images, and video clips of products. It is a very effective medium for distributing product catalogues. Internet publicity is most common these days, not only for business purposes but also for the social cause. The Internet provides a big platform to publicize any product, event, place etc

7. Carry out Online Surveys and Research

Traditional methods of performing surveys are often relatively slow and expensive compared to online surveys conducted on the Internet. It can be used for data collection, collecting reviews

for research and data analysis as well. Internet saves the time of reaching out to big sample and collect data from them. Through the internet, it is possible for a researcher to sit at a place and collect data from different areas. On another hand, numerous journal and publications are available online which a researcher can access for review of the literature. Not only this, but he can also use it for analyzing the data which is collected for research. Different online tools are available which aid the researcher in completing his research.

8. Get Technical Support

There are various things for which one need technical support, viz. for repairing to recycling etc. The Internet has the variety of information regarding technical support for anything. For example in a student need some help to complete his assignment he can use the internet if a mother needs to find the specific recipe she can find it on the internet if someone needs to repair any device or machine even he can find support on the internet. There are different groups, forums platforms available on the internet to help or support people.

9. Obtain Feedback from Mass

The interactive nature of the internet allows everyone to give his or her opinion on a particular topic. There are discussion forums, social networking site, and micro networking site through which people give their feedback may be for the particular event, person or product. It has even become a convenient method for obtaining customer feedback. Almost on every website, there is "feedback" option to identify the satisfaction level of customers regarding the services/products provided. (Top10contributors, 2013)

Advantages of Using an Internet

The internet has become an important part of modern society. The varied usage of the internet by everybody had made it a necessity rather than a status symbol. The Government of India (GoI) has also focused upon the widespread of internet connectivity. The ‘Smart City initiative’ of GoI suggests the government’s concern regarding the availability of internet connection to the citizens. Digitalization and IT connectivity are one of the core infrastructure elements of smart cities. This reflects that the availability of the internet to everyone has become the need of the hour. The Internet has affected the lives of its users with its advantages in many ways. There are different advantages of using the Internet which is as follows-

- **It has a Global Audience**

The Internet has the capability of publishing the content immediately to the global audience. This feature makes the internet a very cost-effective medium to publish information for mass. One can communicate to audiences from the whole world at the same time through the internet.

- **It can be used any time conveniently**

Internet users can use or have access to online content, anytime whenever they are free or they want to use. People use it for different purposes at different timing. The fact that the Internet is operational at all times makes it the most efficient business machine.

- **Relatively Inexpensive**

If someone wants to publish some report, data or anything else on an electronic medium or print medium, it becomes quite expensive and complicated for him and these mediums also allow publishing it to the limited audience. But when it comes to publishing online, it is relatively inexpensive and convenient. At a very little cost of publishing, individuals can publish information to millions of internet users.

- **Multimedia Content**

It has the capability to incorporate multimedia into web pages. This feature allows creating an attractive and unique communication package for everyone. For example, many websites use sounds and video clips to make the content easier and more interesting to browse. (Indonesian Virtual Company, 2007)

Internet Users in India

India is the second highest Internet user base with 481 million internet users and the number of internet users is expected to reach 500 million by June 2018. (Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and India Market Research Bureau (IMRB) International 2017). The increase in a number of internet users has been seen every year.

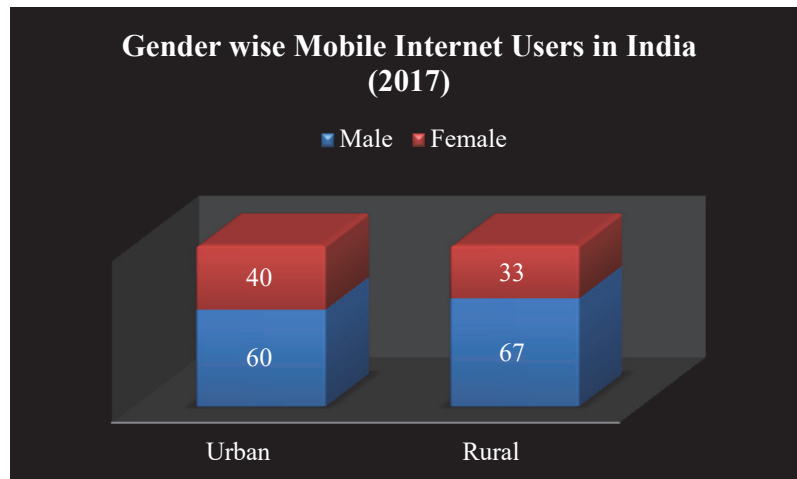
The IMAI and IMRB International (2014) found an increase in a number of internet users by 32% in past one year. The key findings of their market research survey were as follows:

- There were 278 million claimed internet users
- The number of active internet users was 213 million

- The claimed internet users in urban cities have grown by 29%
- There were 152 million active internet users in urban India,
- Compared to previous year, claimed internet users had increased by 39% in rural India to reach 101 Million in October 2014.
- There were 61 Million Active Internet Users in Rural India

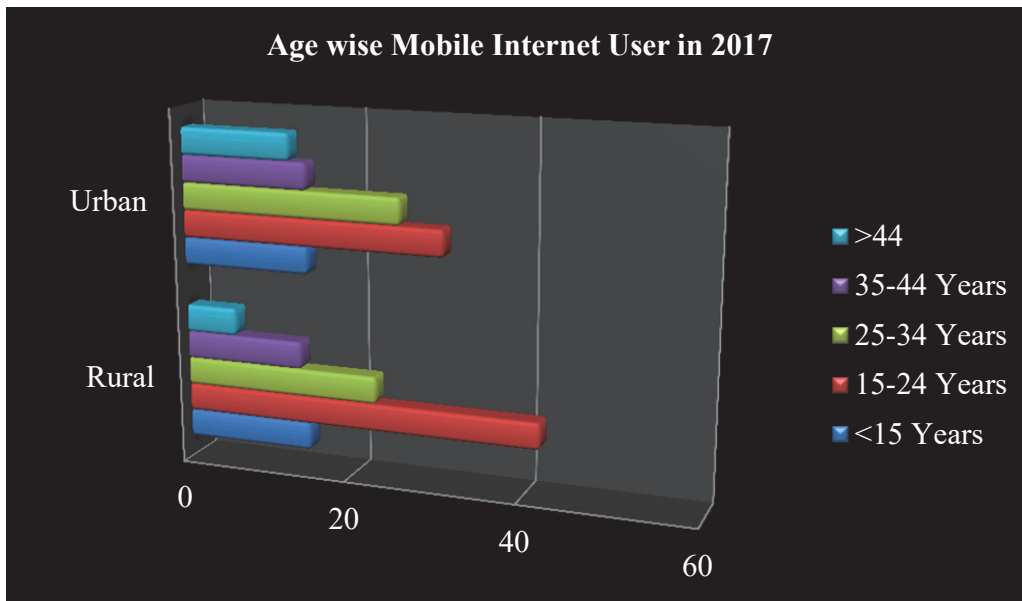
Another mobile internet report of IAMAI and Kantar IMRB reported that One-third of the mobile internet users were female across both Urban and Rural India. It reported there were 40% female mobile internet users in urban areas and 33% rural areas in the year 2017 (IAMAI and Kantar IMRB 2017a)

Figure 2 Gender wise Mobile Internet Users in India



The report further reveals that mobile internet is predominantly used by youngsters. There were 46% of urban internet users and 57% of rural internet users who belonged to the age group of below 25. However, equal distribution of internet users was found for the age range of 35 to 44 in urban and rural areas.

Figure 3 Age wise Mobile Internet Users in India (2017)



This could be the reason for India to stand second among the highest smartphone user's country in the world with more than 300 million smartphone users. (Statista, 2017)

In December 2017, the overall internet penetration in India was 35% of the total population. Internet penetration in Urban India was 64.84% in December 2017 as compared to 60.6% last December. In comparison, Rural Internet penetration has grown from 18% last December to 20.26% in December 2017. These figures highlight the digital divide that exists in urban and rural India. The population that is unreached by internet in rural India still seems to be of 'giant size'. There were 281 Million (estimated) daily Internet users, out of which 62% of them access the internet daily in urban area, as compared to 53%, in rural India. However, internet user base is still male dominating with an estimated 143 million Female internet users i.e. 30% of Total Internet users. These gender gaps and digital divides can be overcome with digital literacy (IAMAI and IMRB, 2018). These statistics support the "Digital India initiative" of Government of India that has been initiated in the year 2014. It is a multi-facet programme to provide internet access to the country through infrastructure facilities for internet, e-governance and digital literacy as well as through enhancing electronic manufacturing capabilities.