

A Study on Awareness and Usage of Smartphones among Home Makers in Arakkonam Region of Tamil Nadu

¹S.Habeeb Ur Rahaman, ²Dr.S.Janet Mary

¹Assistant Professor, Centre For Media Studies, Patrician College of arts and science, Adyar, Chennai.600020.,India.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Visual Communication, Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology, Rajiv Gandhi Road, Chennai - 600 119. India

Abstract: Digital media has made an enormous development in day to day life. In this digital world Smartphone plays a vital role in digital media. A Smartphone is a computer which can be hold in hand. It has features like internet access, social media, mobile banking, games, and entertainment. Smartphones are also used to find geographical regions and share location. Smartphones are needed for all the category of people to do their work online from wherever they are. Today many home makers use basic cellular phones. Home makers are in need of Smartphone to do their daily routine works. The Smartphone is helpful to the homemakers to access internet, mobile banking, social media and entertainment. Many homemakers face difficult in using Smartphones and there are many homemakers who are not aware of Smartphones. This study has been helpful in finding out the awareness and usage of Smartphone among home makers. The study has been conducted in Arakkonam region of Tamil Nadu. Homemakers form Arakkonam region were selected as samples. Survey method has been used to collect data from home makers. Sample size of hundred has been used for data collection.

Keywords: Smartphone, Mobile internet, Digital media, Home makers, Social media.

1. INTRODUCTION

Smartphones are the latest and advance development of a basic cellular phone. A Smartphone has advanced features like personal computer. The smartphone has the high resolution touch screen and internet connectivity. It also has the features of web browsing using mobile application. The Smartphones work with operating systems like Android, Symbian, iOS, Black Berry and Windows. The Smartphones have inbuilt memory for data stores which can also be expanded. The access memory RAM is also high for the Smartphones. The screen size of Smartphones are big and it provides easy access to the websites. The development of Smartphones are getting high as per the growth of technology. Smartphone are helpful in entertaining the users by providing movies, music and reality games. Smartphones are more connected with social networks like Facebook, whatsapp, Twitter and through these social network apps people share their ideas, information's and personal updates. Smartphone application's are developed on all categories according to the user needs. Mobile applications are there for information, entertainment, social networks, shopping, banking, games etc. Smartphones also have finger touch gestures for security purpose. The features like accelerometers and gyroscope are some of the added features which helps for playing games. In the Smartphone mobile games can be played with multiple participants from different places who can play a single game altogether. A Smartphone is also equal to a personal computer any user can do all the works from their respective place. The Smartphones also have the sense to detect photo, scan QR code and identify the specific URL address. The digital era has made the usage of Smartphone more among today's generation. There are mobile applications which are developed to do all sorts of official works. Education through mobile was also developed through mobile application. Mobile applications are more useful in making video calls were the user can see the receivers face live as video in his Smartphone. This facility has made an innovative change compare to the older mobiles were they can just talk voice calls. Sharing of data's through mobile application is also a useful technology for Smartphone users. Thus a Smartphone can give enormous facilities and features compared to the bar type mobile phones.

HOME MAKERS AND SMARTPHONE:

Smartphones are more close to all age group of people. Both men and women have needs for Smartphone. Women are using smartphones for getting information, education, and entertainment. Though it is common for all, very few home maker's use Smartphones in rural areas. A Smartphone is helpful for the home makers to educate, empower themselves and to get connect with the world through internet. Today Smartphone is necessary to home makers who take care of their family and all the routine works. The smartphone is helpful to the homemakers through mobile application to fulfil their household requirements. There are mobile applications which are designed with user response that are helpful to home makers to do their works online. They can order things, food and other materials through online shopping applications available in Smartphone. Google maps can be used by homemakers for identifying specific locations and they can also share it with others. Speaking with relatives, friends with live video calling facility is also useful for women at home. They can also do their banking and bill payment works from anywhere through Smartphone application. Some of the mobile applications are designed especially for women's safety and to get health tips. The development in digital technology has made vast changes in the world. Though today many people are learning to change themselves to adapt digital technologies but even today there are people who cannot afford a basic phone. Many home makers in the rural region do not have Smartphones or even a basic phone. They depend on their family member for using the mobile phone. They are also not aware of thing that can be done easily with Smartphone. Some of the homemaker own Smartphone but they are not aware of its uses completely.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Smartphones are today considered as the important requirement in this digital world. India being a developing country shows more attention to the digital gadgets and technology to develop their standard like other countries. The government takes many initiatives to make ever thing digital in the country. Smartphone development has a major role in making things digital. The usage of Smartphones are seen more in cities and towns, but very few people use them in villages. The knowledge and awareness about Smartphone in village is very less. In a family the husband and the children help the home maker to know about the latest technologies and how to use it. The purpose of this study is to know how many homemakers are aware of Smartphones and its usage. There are many homemakers who do not own a Smartphone. Some homemakers still use basic phone as they are not educated and aware of Smartphones. When things are changing to digital how these people manage themselves to adapt to the digital society. Homemakers get more help on the usage of Smartphones from their husband and educated children. There are some homemakers who are educated and aware of using Smartphone. The research is carried out at Arakkonam , Vellore district, Tamil Nadu. According to the survey of 2011 the literary rate is high in Arakkonam municipal region compare to the other region of Vellore district. Hence the survey is carried out in Arakkoam region to find out how many homemakers are using Smartphones and how many are using basic phone. The finding of this study is helpful to know how far the digital technologies have reached to the home makers in Arakkonam region.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Amy Antonio.,David Tuffley research on the gender digital divide in developing countries (2014) says that women's denying themselves to adopt technologies because of their traditional customs and beliefs. The participation of both men and women in using internet still varies were men is more.

Comscore (2010) in his article women on web has written that women have very less access to internet compared to other nations. It is around 28% from the overall population. Women have very less access to smartphone and mobile internet it is because they do not own smartphone unlike men.

According to Dayoung Lee (2009)in his research paper Impact of mobile phone on the status of women in India states that compare to women huge number of men own mobile phones. The research also states that the government of India has taken measures in educating women for empowerment and creating knowledge about mobile phone usage. A women is need of mobile phone since she takes care of the household works of house for maximum time.

According to Divatia A. and Patel M , the study conducted on Selected Social Media Applications Usage Practices of Homemakers say that womens are not more connected with social networks. The research has been done with 80 samples and ten different social networks were taken for analysis. The report says that only whatsapp social network has more number of user compared to all other nine networks. Most of the social sites have zero users. Smartphone usage and its

awareness are very essential for women in rural areas. Many researches regarding the media literacy among women state that education is needed for women to know about the awareness and usage of Smartphones. According to GSMA research in 2015 regarding digital literacy says that only 19% of women have access to internet in India. The research also says that 76% of women in India are in need of help from others to access internet.

According to the GSMA report 2018 only 13% of have women have access to internet in India. The gender gap in India covers over 70%. There are 65% of women mobile owner's of which only 8% of them have access to mobile internet. Women who are aware of mobile internet is 19%. Around 25% of women do not know how to use mobile phone

According to the survey from PEW research centre (2016) it states that India has a gender gap in using internet and Smartphones. Around 17% of Women and 27% Men use Smartphones and internet. Around 42% of Indian's who access internet several times. As per the survey 17% of Indians own Smartphones, 61% of Indian own basic cellular phones and 22% of Indians does not have mobile phone.

According to Savita Bailur & Silvia Masiero (2017) women has more potential through mobile phone and mobile internet. Technology growth has been helping women in empowerment. More men are close to technologies of mobile phone compare to women. Education and technology awareness is the fear that stops women to come close to the access of mobile phones and mobile internet. Women also lack in belief about income generation through mobile internet.

According to Savita Aggarwal (2018) Gender gaps in digital literacy: Perspective of urban rural space gender gaps is the major factor that take place in ownership of digital devices. women were also coming forward to use many applications. Women lack in proper training and knowledge about digital devices. Literacy is also a major reason for Women to adopt digital technologies.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research is done with survey methodology with the sample size of hundred. Home makers from Arakkonam region were selected for samples. The samples are taken from municipal as well as village regions. Questionnaire is used to collect the data's from home makers. A set of twenty questions were asked to the home makers. Through those questionnaires the data's are analysed. The questionnaire says about the basic details of home makers then about their knowledge and awareness in usage of smartphones. The questionnaire says about how many home makers are aware of using smart phones. The research also says about the knowledge of home makers in using smartphone services like social networks, mobile apps, entertainment services etc. The survey data has been analysed and is described in charts and graphs.

4. FINDINGS

The research has found out the number of home makers who owns mobile phone. In many families the home makers does not own mobile phone. The mobile is owned by the male and even the children. In some families all the members of the family own mobile phones.

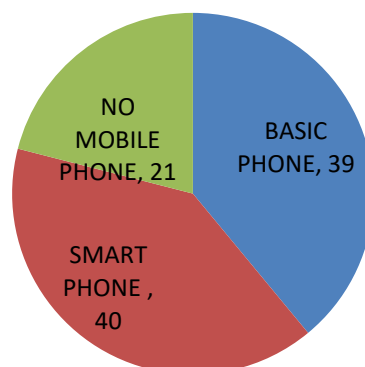


Figure 1: Home makers who own mobile phone

The type of mobile that is owned by homemakers is also a question here. Some homemakers use only basic mobile phones since they are not aware of Smartphone usage. Some homemakers own Smartphone but they know to access the basics only. In this case the homemakers seek the help of their family members to use and learn about Smartphones. There are 79% of homemakers who own mobile phone out of which 40% of them own smartphone and 21% does not have mobile of their own as indicated in Figure 1. Smartphones are used for multitasking purpose. Apart from making phone calls smartphone has many other features which can be accessed through mobile application. A smartphone is used as hand hold computer as it has all the features equal to a computer. Some Homemakers use smartphone only for voice calls and responding to the incoming voice calls. It is because of lack of education about the usage of smartphone. In that case some home makers are aware of using all the features of smart phones. According to the survey 60% of home makers who are not aware of using smartphone and 40% of Home makers are aware of using smartphones out of which 10% of home makers use smartphone for making calls and 30% of them use for making calls and other services that are available through Smartphone as indicated in Figure 2.

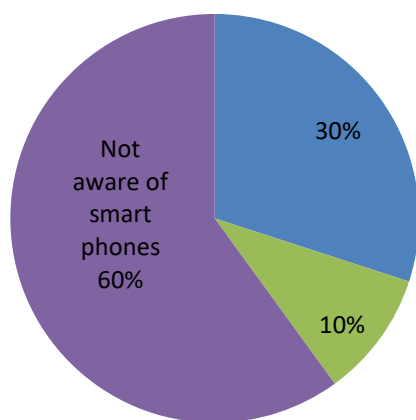


Figure 2: Awareness of Smartphone

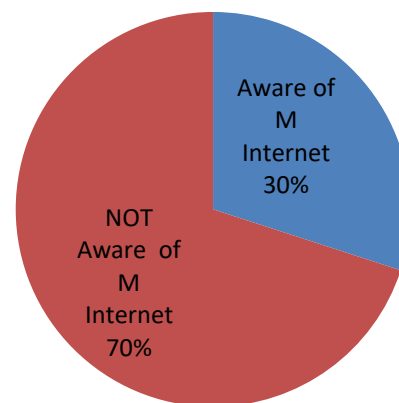


Figure 3: Awareness of Mobile Internet

Internet plays a vital role in the usage of smartphones and its applications. It is necessary for the home makers to aware about mobile internet. According to the survey figure 3 says 30% of home makers are aware of mobile internet and 70% of home makers are not aware of mobile internet. This states that even if some homemakers own smartphones they are not aware of mobile internet so they use smartphone only for voice call purpose.

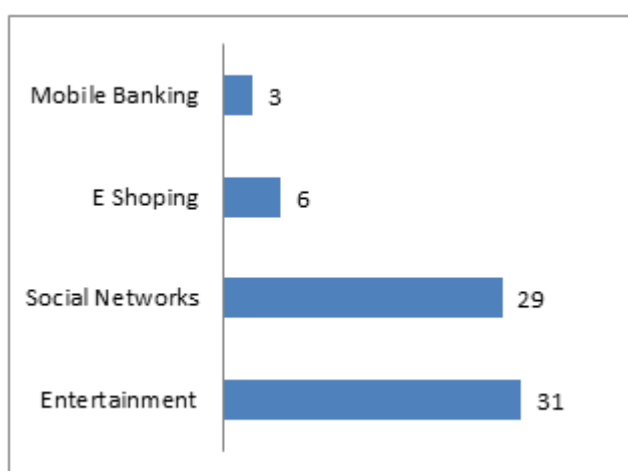


Figure 4: Usage of E services in Smartphone

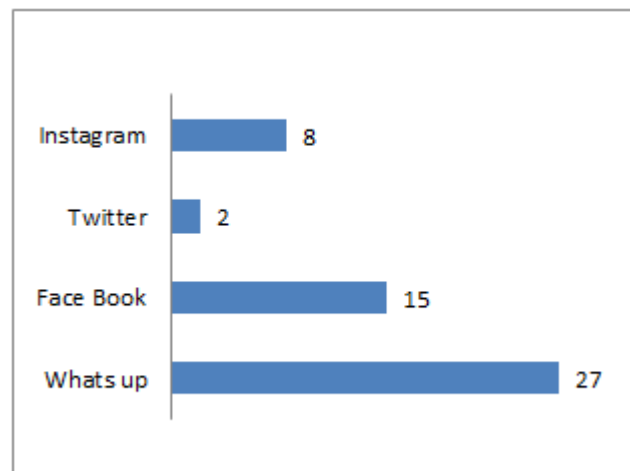


Figure 5: Access to Social networks

Smartphones are used by people of different age group for entertainment purpose. Using smartphone we play music, watch videos, games, mobile television etc. The survey says that 31% of home makers use smartphones for the entertainment purpose as indicated in figure 4. So these home makers use their smartphones for various entertainment activities. Social networks are very easily accessible using smartphones the smartphone user can access all social sites through smartphones applications. There are 29% of home makers who have access to social media. Smartphone is also used in other services like mobile banking, shopping, bill payments etc. Only 3% of home makers use smartphones for mobile banking. Retail selling has been more popular in online media. There are many online shopping websites and mobile applications which can be used through smartphones. Online shopping facility saves the time of travelling to the shop. So most of the younger generation preferred for online shopping. The customer also gets more offers when they go for purchasing a product online. Survey says that only 6% of home makers use their smartphone for E shopping. Social media plays a major role through smartphone as indicated in Figure 5. Many of them use social media for message transfer and also for entertainment. Whatsapp is a social media messenger which more widely used through mobile application. According to the survey report 27% of home makers use whatsapp social media application. When compare to whatsapp other social media's like facebook is used by 15% twitter is used by 2% and instagram is used by 8% of home makers. The highest number of users for whatsapp is only because it is easy to use. The user can instantly send or receive images, text message, videos and audios. It also has the feature of live video calling. Whatsapp is easy to access compare with other social medias like facebook, twitter, Instagram.

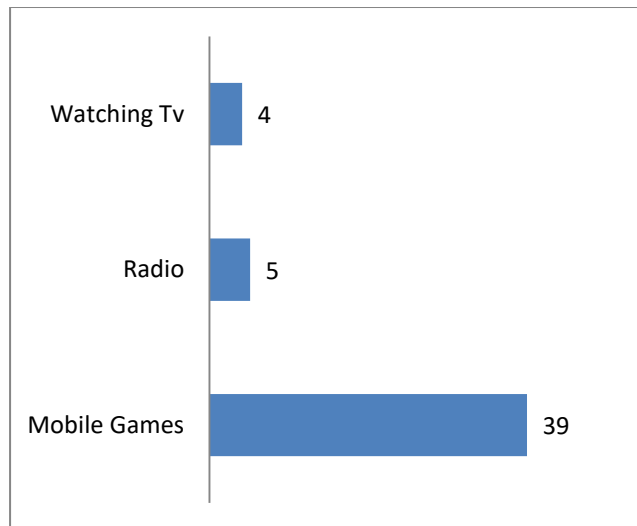


Figure 6: Using Entertainment services

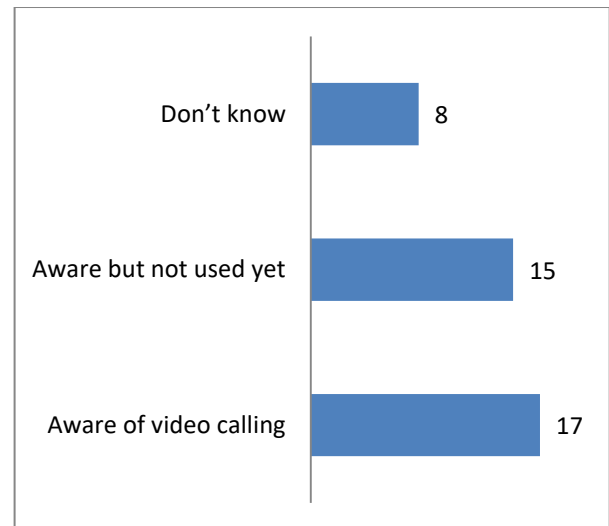


Figure 7: Awareness on Video Calling

Smartphones are also used for watching television programme. Many mobile applications are available for watching live television channels through smart phone. Home makers can use smartphone for watching television using smart phones. The survey report says that only 4% of home makers watch television through smartphones as indicated in Figure 6. Radio is also an audio entertainment which is used by many people during their work. 5% of Home makers use radio for their entertainment purpose. Mobile games are more popular today. Smartphones have more featured games that give a reality gaming experience. Around 39% of home makers use smartphone games for their entertainment. Smartphone has another feature called video calling as indicated in Figure 7. All the smartphones have dual cameras which help to take photos and videos from both sides. Using the front camera the user can make a video call through smartphone application. In live video phone call both the caller can see themselves through the cameras. This video calling facility required internet for live streaming. Many youngsters use this facility to speak live. The study has shown that around 17% of home makers are aware of this facility and they are using it. About 15% of home makers are aware of video calling but they have not used it. 8% of home makers have no idea about this feature.

Home makers can use smartphone for their daily routine works. The mobile applications are available for all sorts of works. Smartphone can save the time of travelling from one place to another. Although many home makers does not use smartphones. They depend on their family members for seeking help to learn about the usage of smart phones. The survey says 35% of home makers are seeking help to their family members for usage of smartphones. The survey also says that in most of the families smartphone is owned by the bread winner which is about 83%.

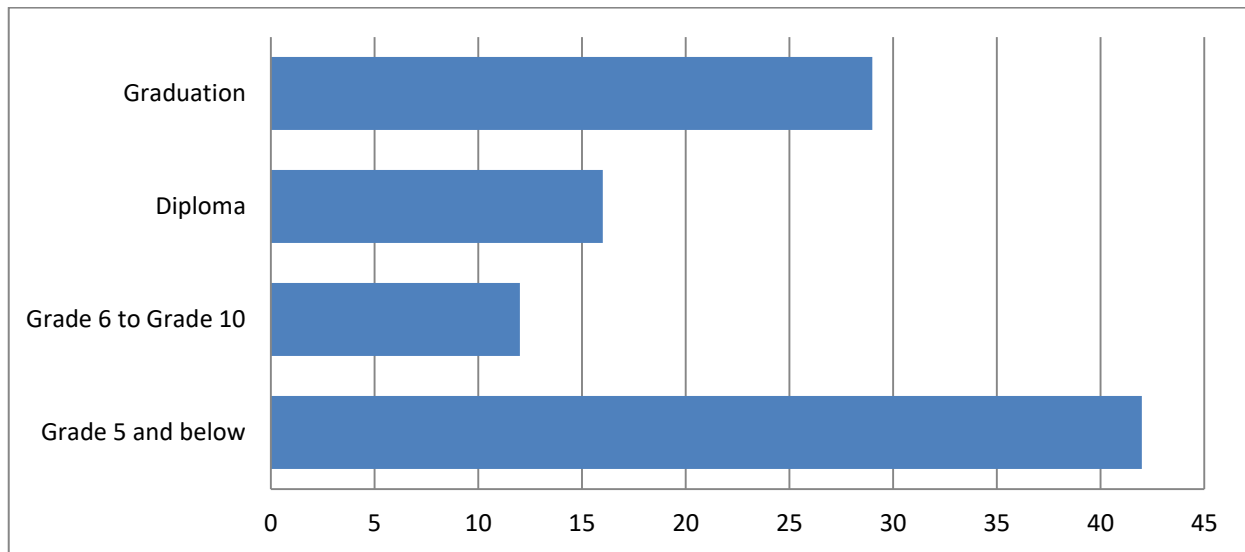


Figure 8: Education grade of home makers

As the research is about smartphones and its usage, it also speaks about the educational qualification of home makers. It is necessary to have a minimum qualification to access the smart technologies in today's world. The surveys also says about the education qualification of homemakers. 12% of home makers have qualified from grade six to secondary level of school and 16% have got qualified to higher secondary school or diploma and 29% of them are graduates. 42% home makers who were qualified below grade five as indicated in figure 8. Thus smartphones users need basic education to access to the application and the advance features in it.

5. CONCLUSION

Smartphones are used by all age group of people. Smartphones are nearly equal to a personal computer which is easy to carry and access from anywhere. Smartphones are use to save time and do the work instantly. Smartphone is a developed technology that is filled with applications and is used in all sectors of works. Every men and women are in need of smartphone in today's scenario. A smartphone is used for making voice or video call, messages, internet, social network, information gathering and more. Today many home making related works where we spend more time in standing queue is done by a smartphone from wherever we are. Home makers are the people who must have the access to smartphone. Home makers can use smartphone for making voice call, video call sending and receiving messages, sending and receiving media files, internet, education and entertainment. Home makers can also use smartphone for paying bills, making online purchase, sending or receiving money through mobile applications. The study says that even today there are many home makers who do not own mobile phone and there are home makers who have basic phone. Smartphone is owned by 40% of home makers which is not even the half of the sample. In many homes children own smartphone rather than the parents because they are getting educated. Home makers have ideas about smartphones but they are unable to use it. Education is also a major factor that affects the home makers from not being in touch with new technologies. Home makers who are really interested in using smart technologies learn them through their family members. In this case there are home makers who are not educated to the minimum level but they have learned from their family members to access smart phones. Though the smartphones have all language communication technology, home makers are not aware about it. The other reason is that they face difficult, with English to access the smart phones. So education related to the languages available in smartphone has to be given to home makers. Education is the main factor where home makers lack themselves in access to the technologies. Introduction of new digital technologies to the country is a good initiative but at the same the people of the country has to be educated regarding the new technologies. Awareness regarding the access for new technologies has to be made to all the people in the villages and municipal council. Even though the home makers have minimum education they can be trained by the self help groups for the access of smartphones. Thus smartphones are a needed technology to the home makers were they get their daily work done easy and fast. Education is also important regarding the usage of smartphones so that they also have access to the smartphone and applications as like the working class women.

REFERENCES

- [1] Amy Antonio.,David Tuffley (2014) , The Gender Digital Divide in Developing Countries, Future Internet 6, 673-687
- [2] Comscore ,(2010) Women on the web, How women are shaping the internet. www.comscore.com
- [3] Dayoung Lee (2009) The Impact of Mobile Phones on the Status of Women in India., dayoungl@stanford.edu
- [4] Divatia A. and Patel M (2017), A Study on Selected Social Media Applications Usage Practices of Homemakers, International Journal of Social Science and Humanity, Vol. 7, No. 6
- [5] GSMA (2015) Accelerating Digital Literacy: Empowering women to use mobile internet, www.gsma.com/connectedwomen
- [6] GSMA (2018) Connected Women “The mobile Gender Gap Reports” www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/programmes/connected-women
- [7] JACOB POUHTER (2016) Smartphone Ownership and Internet Usage Continues to Climb in Emerging Economies www.pewresearch.org/staff/jacob-poushter
- [8] Savita Bailur , Silvia Masiero (2017) Women’s income generation through mobile Internet: a study of focus group data from Ghana,Kenya, and Uganda
- [9] Savita Aggarwal, ShivangiGoswami, TanviNayyar, Kritika Kumar (2018), Gender gaps in digital literacy: Perspective of urban rural space,