

Awareness and Use of Internet and Online Services among Homemakers in Kollam District, Kerala, India



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ABSTRACT: Internet has become the indivisible part of the modern world. For each and everything people depend upon the internet. Irrespective of belonging to any agegroup, it is the main source of information. So the purpose of dependency of internet is diverse. It depends upon the choice of the person who uses it. Homemakers require internet for various purposes. There are countless areas where the application of the internet is important. In the present study we did a survey analysis to understand the awareness and use of internet and online services among the homemakers in Kollam districts, Kerala, India. Asramam, Kavanad, Uliyakovil and Mundakkal ward of Kollam corporation are the areas chosen for conducting the research work. Convenience sampling method was selected for the study. The data collected were processed and analyzed. It was found that most of the times the internet applications helped the homemakers to ease their works.

KEYWORDS: Homemakers, online, internet, Flipkart, Facebook, Amazon, BookMyShow, Twitter, debit card, Paytm, Google Pay.

INTRODUCTION

The use of internet has made numerous things easy and fast. It has not just become a means of looking for information but of social relationships and communications with other people, for business or commercial purpose, or for interacting with old friends (Ciboh, 2015). Digital inclusion offers a variety of benefits for societies, such as access to information, communication, learning and business opportunities etc (Choudhury, 2004) and Hasan, Md. (2008). Technology alone may help homemakers in composing all the day to day events in their life (Divatia A. and Patel M. 2017). This is possible only with the help of online platforms and applications. For a homemaker these platforms can help bring all their requirements at a single click to the doorstep. Choice and convenience of consumers has increased with advent of online stores like Myntra, Flipkart, Snapdeal, Jabong, Amazon etc. crowding the web space (Hynes and Rommes., 2006). More and more offline stores and services are rapidly getting into the online space. With the introduction of smart phones, 3G broadband internet services, more and more consumers are switching to online shopping for routine as well as fashion needs (Agarwal, *et al.*, 2014). Anybody, who have little or no entrepreneurial experience start a business from the confines of their homes using social media platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram, or ecommerce platforms at minimum cost. Koufaris (2002) states that online customer behaviour is both similar and different from the traditional customer behaviour. Internet as the main source to communicate with people around the world, helps to do their works easier. Home makers utilize internet platforms for online payment, purchasing of goods, sending of messages, for finding new information, submitting applications, helping children in doing their home works and in attending online classes and exams. Thus the knowledge of internet and online services are required for home makers to do their house hold works easy and fast. The Internet has been identified as a very promising channel for supporting services, as it is well suited for communication and information exchange, which are key components of nearly all supporting services (Jahan. R (1994)).

Firms have developed various forms of online support, often complementing, sometimes substituting or extending their existing services. Customers expect similar quality levels from these electronically offered supporting services as from their traditional counterparts. Still, many online services do not seem to be designed in a way that appeals to customers. Nor does their design maximize their benefits. Although some research exists on consumer evaluations of e-services, there is a general lack of research with respect to the impact of technology on various customer responses, such as perceived service quality, value, satisfaction and loyalty. A better understanding of how customers evaluate online support and develop behavioral intentions as a result of these evaluations will help companies to improve their online support offering and maximize customer

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value(Kabeer.N(2005). In this present study we intended to study the factors that motivated the homemakers to use internet and online services, to identify the purpose for which internet and online services are used by the homemakers and to evaluate the benefits gained by the use of internet and online services by the homemakers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is an attempt to evaluate the information regarding the use and awareness of internet and online service among homemakers in Kollam districts of Kerala, India. Survey method was used for the study. Asramam, Kavanad, Uliyakovil and Mundakkal ward of Kollam corporation were selected. Hundred samples (25 homemakers from each ward) were selected using convenience sampling procedure. Interview method was used for collecting data. The selected respondents were visited personally by the interviewer. After establishing the rapport, the purpose for the visit was explained. After that the data was collected and recorded in the schedule by asking the questions as given in the schedule. The data collected has to be processed and analyzed in accordance with the outline laid down for the purpose at the time of developing the research plan. The data collected were coded and two-way tables were used with percentage for generalizing the details.

RESULT

The data pertaining to the present study have been analysed and capsulated in tabular forms and presented under appropriate heads. From the sample studies, it is clear that, 78% of the respondents belong to the nuclear family and 20% of the respondents belong to the joint family. The age of respondents range from 21 years to 55 with a mean age of 25. Majority (49%) of the respondents belong to the age group 21-30, 30% belong to the age group 41-50, 15% belong to the age group 31-40, and the remaining 6% of the respondents are above fifty one years. (Figure.1).

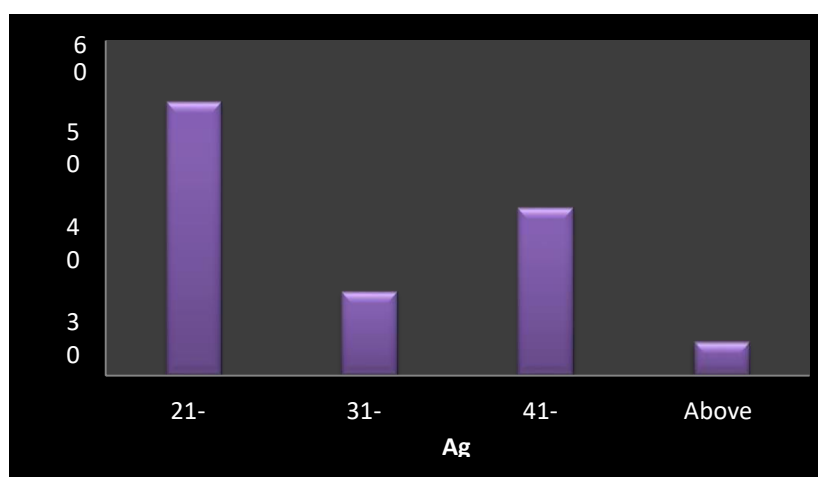


Figure 1. Diagrammatic representation of respondents based on age.

Majority (44%) of the respondents live in coastal area, 31% live in rural area and 25% of them live in town area. Majority (35%) of the respondents are graduates, 27% of them are qualified up to SSLC, 16% of them are postgraduates and only 9% of them have qualification above postgraduation. Majority (52%) of the respondents were unemployed. 8% of them were Govt. Employees, 11% of them were working in private sector, 7% of them were self-employed/ doing business and professionals respectively and 5% of them were employed on daily wages.

Table 1. Monthly Income of the Family.

Monthly	Percentage* (N=100)
Less than 10000	28%
10001- 30000	39%
30001 – 60000	18%
Above 60000	15%

*Multiple responses

Table.6. shows that the monthly family income ranges from Rs 9000 to 125000. 28% of the respondents have a family income of less than Rs 10000. 39% of them fell between Rs 10001 and Rs 30000/- per month. 18% of the respondents are in a monthly

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income bracket of Rs 30001 and Rs 60000. Respondents with a monthly family income above 61000 is 15 % (Table.1).

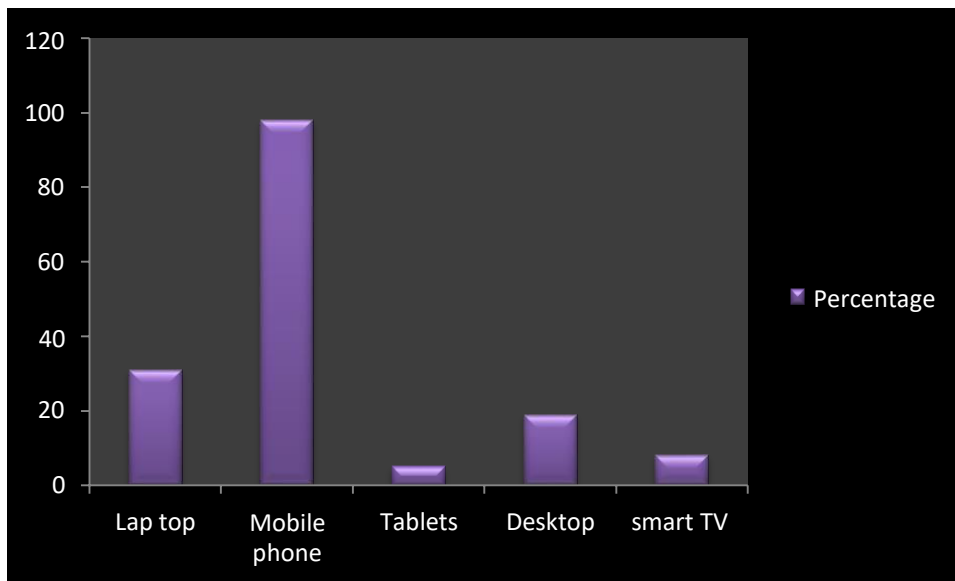


Figure.2. Device possessed for using internet and online service by the respondents.

It is clear from the above figure that some of the respondents possess more than one device for using internet and online services. Majority (98%) of the respondents possess mobile phones for using internet and online services. 31% of them possess lap top. Desktop is owned by 19% respondents. 8% of the respondents own smart TV and five percent of them possess Tablet.

Table 2. Confidence in using internet and Online Services by the Respondents.

Confidence in using online service	Percentage* (N=100)
Extremely confident	21%
Moderately confident	34%
Less confident	27%
Not at all confident	18%

Table 2 shows that majority (34%) of the respondents are moderately confident in using internet. Twenty seven percent of them have less confidence in using internet. Twenty one percent of the respondents are extremely confident and 18% percent of them are not at all confident in using internet and online services.

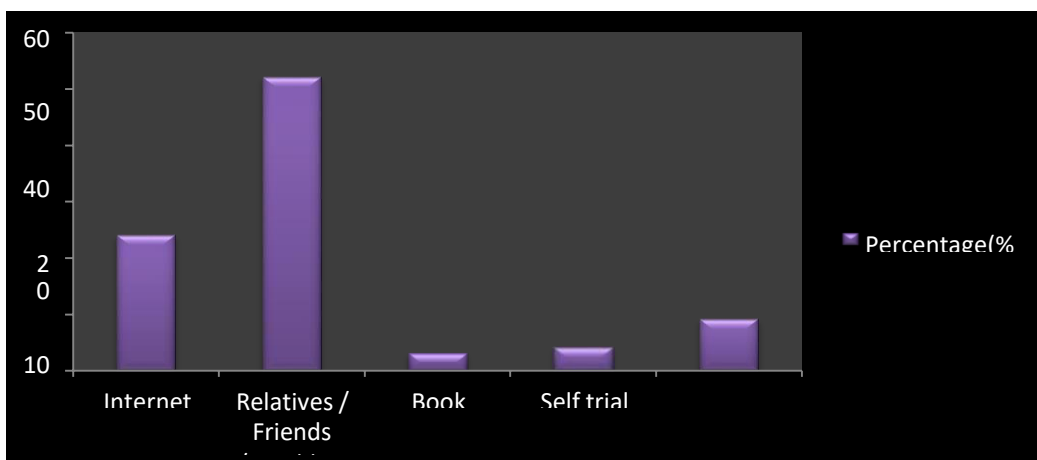


Figure.3. Sources from where the Respondents learned to use internet and online services.

Figure.3. reveals that majority (52%) of the respondents learned to use internet and online services from their relatives / friends / neighbours. Twenty four percent of the respondents learned to use internet and online services from internet itself. Nine

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percent of them learned from WhatsApp and 4% of them learned by themselves. Three percent learned from books.

Table.3. Purpose for which internet is used.

Purpose	Percentage*(N=100)
To browse and download study materials	42%
To clear doubt	69%
To send mail	37%
To chat with friends	11%
To track location /orders	26%
Job hunting	3%
Shopping	72%
Payment of bills	47%
Net banking	18%
Watch movies and listen to music	59%
To do project and presentation	2%
To attend online classes	46%
For group discussion	6%
To make video calls	37%
To conduct meeting	3%
Business	2%

*Multiple responses

Table .3 reveals the purpose for which internet is used by the respondents. Majority (72%) of them used internet for shopping. 69% of the respondents used internet to clear doubt. 59% of them used internet to watch movies and listen to music . 47% of them used internet for payment of bills. 46% of them used internetto attend online classes. 42% used the internet services to browse and download study materials. 37% of the respondents used internet to make video call and to send mail respectively.26% percent of them used internet to track location/orders, Internet was used fornet banking by 18% respondents. 11% respondents used internet to chat with friends. 6 % of the respondents used internet for group discussion . 3% of the respondents used internet for job hunting and to conduct meetings respectively.2% of the respondents used internet for business and to prepareprojects andpresentations.

Table.4.Benefits derived from the use of internet and online services.

Benefit derived from online services	Percentage*(N=100)
Time saving	83%
Made many tasks easy	89%
Easy sharing of images videos and messages	92%
Cost savings	21%
Stress relief	58%
Less paper work	78%
Less dependence on others	60%
Reduce travel	79%
Manage business/ transaction from anywhere in the world at any time.	42%
Global access , 24hrs a day , 7 days in a week	99%

Multiple responses*

Table.4.reveals the benefit derived from the use of internet and online services. Global assess, 24hrs a day and seven days in a week was the major benefit experienced by 99% of the respondents. 93 % percent of the respondents say that the use of internet and online services saved lot of time. Ease of sharing messages, images and videos were the benefits reported by 92% respondents.

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89% of the respondents opine that using internet and online services made many tasks easy. Reduced travel was the benefit reported by 79% respondents. Less paper work was reported by 78% respondents. Less dependence on others was the benefit delineated by 60% respondents. Stress relief was reported by 58% respondents. Ability to manage business/ transactions from anywhere in the world at any time was the benefit stated by 42% respondents. Cost saving was the benefit reported by 21% respondents on using internet and online services.

Table.5.Type of electronic banking services used by the Respondents.

Type of electronic banking services used	Percentage (N=100)*
Fund transfer	11%
Withdrawal of money from ATM	57%
Regular checking of bank statement	18%
request any card or cheque book service	8%
Mobile banking	9%
Internet banking	8%
Shopping	72%
Investing/ depositing / depositing money.	7%

Multiple responses*

Table.5.reveals the electronic banking services used by the respondents. All the 100 respondents drew money from ATM. Shopping was done by 72% respondents.22 % of them made bill payments. 18 % of them used electronic banking for regular checking of bank statement. Fund transfer was done by 11% respondents.Mobile banking was done by 9% respondents. Electronic banking was used to request for any card or cheque book service and for net banking by 8% respondents respectively. 7% of the respondents used electronic banking for investing.

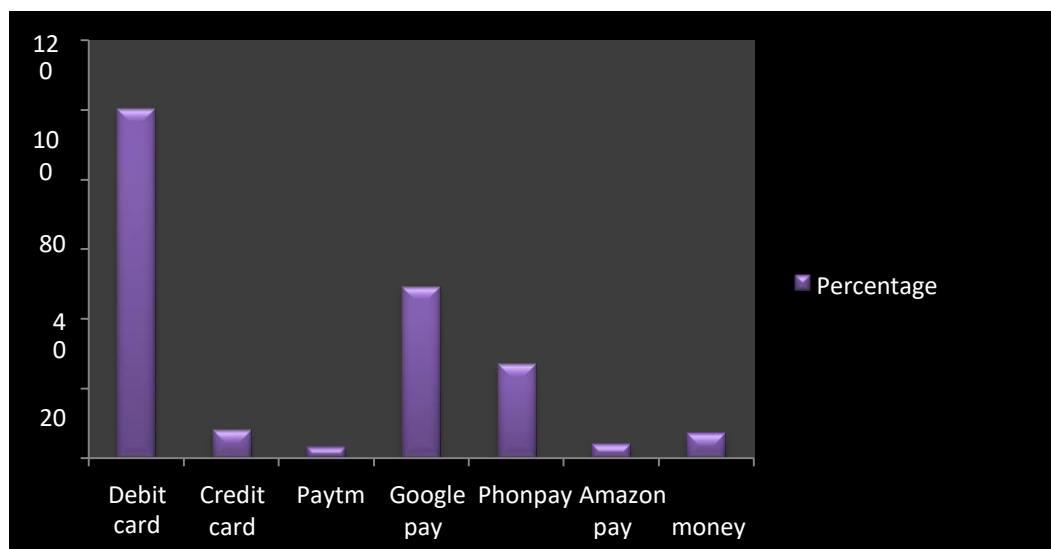


Figure.4.payment method used.

Figure.4.reveals the payment methods used by the respondents. All the respondents in the study used Debit cards to make payments. Google Pay was used by around one half (49%) of the respondents. PhonePe was used by around one fourth (27%) of the respondents. Credit card was used by 8% respondents. Seven percent of the respondents used Airtel money and Paytm respectively and AmazonPay was used by 6% respondents.

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Table.6.Factors that promoted the use of online shopping.

Factor that promoted use of onlineshopping	Percentage *(N=72)
Convenience	94.4%
Availability of variety of products	97.22%
Compare price	93.05%
Ease to send gift	62.5%
Save time	93.05%
Can shop anytime from any place	100%
Check review of products	62.5%
Reduced frequent visit to shops in search of items and associated problems	70.83%
No need for physical money	97.22%

Multiple responses

Table.6.reveals the factors that promoted the use of online shopping. Ability to shop from any place at any time was the major factor that promoted all the respondents to do online shopping. Convenience was the factor reported by 94.4 % Availability of variety of products and no need for physical money were the factors that promoted the use of online services by 97.22% respondents respectively. Save time and ability to compare price were the factors reported by 93.05% respondents . Reduced frequent visit to shops in search of items and associated problems were the factors reported by 51% respondents. Check review of products and ease of sending gifts were the factors reported by 45% respondents.

Table.7.Type of commodities purchased through online shopping

Type of commodities purchased through online shopping	Percentage *(N=72)
All household items	79.16%
Dress materials	63.88%
Cosmetic items	33.33%
Food	94.44%
Medicine	5.55%
Tickets	54.16%
Jewelry	26.38%
Foot wares	43.05%
Fitness/ sports items	15.27%
Spare parts	22.22%
Electronic accessories	29.16%
Books	12.5%
Garden tools	11.11%
Plants	8.33%

Multiple responses*

Table.7.reveals the type of commodities purchased by the respondents through online shopping. Food was the item purchased through online by majority (94.44%)of the respondents. Online purchase of household items was done by 79.16% respondents. Dress materials were purchased by 63.88% respondents. Ticket booking was done by 54.16% respondents. Foot wares were purchased by 43.05% respondents. Cosmetic items were purchased by 33.33% respondents . Electronic accessories were purchased by 29.16% respondents. Jewelry was purchased online by 26,38% respondents. Spare parts were purchased by 22.22% respondents. Fitness and sports items were purchased by 15.27% respondents. Garden tools and plants were purchased by 11.11% and 8.33% respondents respectively. Books were

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purchased by 12.5% respondents and 5.55% respondents purchased medicines online.

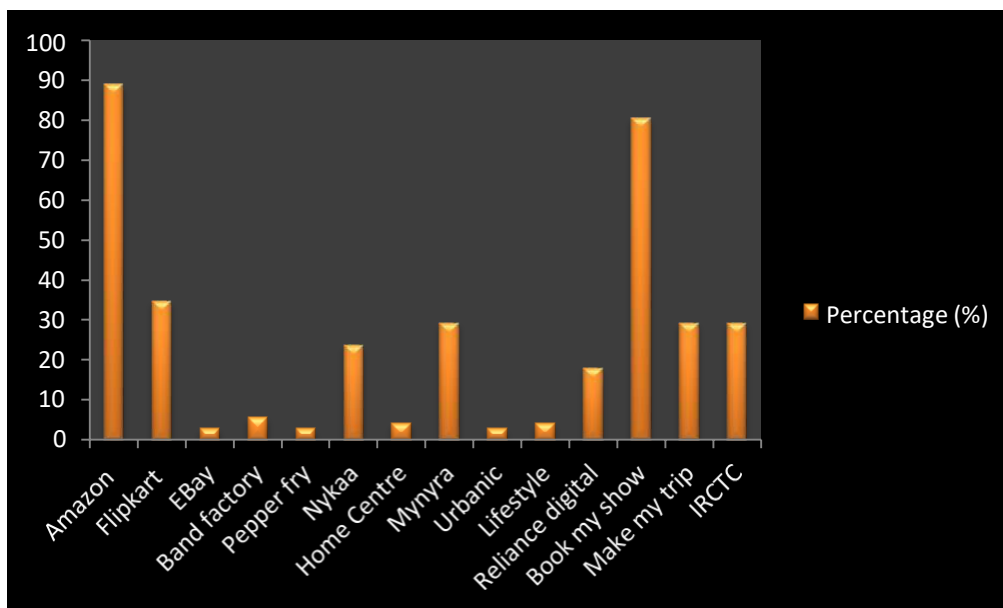


Figure.5.Website used for shopping.

Figure.5. reveals the websites used for shopping by the respondents. Amazon was the website used by majority (88.88%) of the respondents for shopping. Book MyShow was used by 80.55% respondents. One fourth (34.72%) of the respondents used Flipkart for shopping online. Myntra, Make My Trip, IRCTC were used by 29.16% respondents respectively. Nykaa was used by 23.61% respondents. 18.35% respondents shopped using the website Reliance digital. Brand factory and Home center was used by 4.16% respondents respectively. Lifestyle was used for shopping by 4.16% respondents. eBay, Pepper fry and Urbanic were used for shopping by 2.77% respondents.

Table.8. Satisfaction gained from the use of products purchased online.

Satisfaction	Percentage* (N=100)
Extremely	51.38%
Moderately	37.5%
Slightly	9.72%
Not at all	1.38%

Table.8. reveals the satisfaction gained from the use of products purchased online. Majority (51.38%) of the respondents were extremely satisfied with the products purchase online. 37.5% of them were moderately satisfied. Less than ten percent (9.72%) of them were slightly satisfied and only 1.38% of them were not at all satisfied by the products purchased online.

DISCUSSION

In the present study, we checked the awareness and use of internet services among the home makers in Kollam and Alappuzha districts of Kerala, Kollam. In the samples collected, majority of them were graduates and unemployed. Income of the family was not a concern for searching and using the internet. 98% of the people used the mobile phone for using internet services. The purpose of searching was different and unique. Benefits derived from internet were also different such as saving time, making the tasks easy, for using social media etc. Most of them used the internet banking for shopping. Food items are the most frequently searched commodity. Amazon and Book My Show are the mostly used sites. There are countless needs for which the home makers use internet on a daily basis. According to Rajasekhar *et.al.*, 2015 with increasing literacy rates and a growing purchase power, the urban homemaker in India is a crucial target for government, ecommerce and e-marketers of products and services, among others. There are some basic household responsibilities like cooking, childcare, cleaning, washing of clothes and utensils, grocery shopping, family budgeting that every family needs to perform, which can be fulfilled with the help of internet (Chauhan.L., 2021).

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According to Divatia A. and Patel M (2017) in present times, house wives are way ahead in using internet services as compared to college students and working women. Indian housewives are evidently making their existence felt on the social media. Gandhiya.P(2016) states that with the changing socio-cultural scenario and increasing spread of Internet and mobiles, housewives have started using various social media through their mobile phones or computers at home. In a work by Choudhury.N(2009), he reveals how women participate in the decision-making process associated with Internet adoption. Nysveen *et.al.*,2005 conducted a study, its results suggest that social norms and intrinsic motives such as enjoyment are important determinants of intention to use among female users, whereas extrinsic motives such as usefulness and – somewhat surprisingly – expressiveness are key drivers among men. Women are marginalised by their own anxieties, roles and beliefs rooted in traditional norms as well as by illiteracy and economic circumstances. The media too are responsible for skewing women's self- perceptions which hinder their use of the Internet (Johnson.V.,2010). Social factors, such as the role of parents and social communities, were found to influence women to develop and maintain interests in ICT that were reflected in their professional and personal lives.

CONCLUSION

Internet is one of the basic requirements of today's digital world. Akin to all other people, home makers are also learning to use new technologies. Internet is used by homemakers through computer, laptop, Smartphone. The homemakers of Kollam district have basic qualification from class X to higher education than post graduation. The knowledge of internet is obtained through many sources like relatives / friends / neighbors, internet itself, WhatsApp and from books. Information related to new products that arrive in market is obtained through internet. It is noted that many home makers use internet for many purposes like learning new things , shopping, paying bills , checking messages, watching movies and listening to music, finding recipes etc. Watching programs using internet and social media usage are some of the other utilities of internet service used by homemakers. Sharing of images, videos and messages are also the advantages of internet. Homemakers developed a strong sense of confidence to utilize internet in an appropriate way. The further recommendation for this study is to analyse the major websites, online services, mobile applications that are used by homemakers to do business and the difficulties faced by them on using these and to help internet providers and device manufacturers to design women friendly mobile applications enhancing the safety of women at an affordable price.

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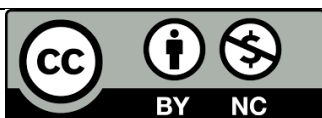
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