



# **The Internet and Its Impact on Students: Usage Patterns, Benefits, and Challenges**

## **(Derived From on-Ground Study Carried out in Navsari District, Gujarat)**

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### **1. Abstract**

The present analysis deals with the pattern of internet use among students in Gujarat's Navsari district, specifically its significance and challenges. Based on a structured questionnaire, the study evaluated how students make use of the internet in their day-to-day academic practices, the level of interaction, and the impact on academic achievement and well-being. The results illustrate a dynamic interplay between positive educational uses and distractions to physical, psychological, and academic problems. The study ends by suggesting pragmatic approaches to reconcile digital learning with health, productivity, and personal growth.

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**Keywords :** Internet usage, students, digital learning, internet addiction, Navsari, Gujarat, academic performance, digital literacy

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### **2. Introduction / Preamble (Enhanced Academic Version)**

The common use of the internet in everyday life has deeply impacted the ways students attain education, interact, and connect with the world. Especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, internet use by students increased worldwide, making it a significant shift in the study environment. Navsari district in Gujarat, India, has been the focus of this study as a typical region for evaluating the subtle impacts of internet use by students. The inquiry encompasses both the quantitative and qualitative aspects through a structured survey tool as part of a Rapid Assessment Study.

Current research highlights a twofold narrative: the internet, in empowering learners with access, instant knowledge exchange, and interactive learning interfaces, also subjects them to severe threats. They range from academic distraction, psychological problems, addiction, physical health problems, and increasing reliance on AI tools. This current research assesses these challenges within the context of the region, adding localized analysis to the overall academic literature.

Grounded in newer empirical findings (2024–2025), this study attempts to study usage trends, estimate psychological and academic effects, and investigate the digital divide among students in semi-urban and rural clusters of Gujarat. Based on careful analysis of field data, this study underlines the seriousness of promoting digital literacy, balanced technology use, and inclusive internet access. It also offers actionable recommendations to educators, families, and policymakers working towards ensuring healthy and productive digital engagement by students.

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### **3. Literature Review**

Past research has shown that the use of the internet by students provides unprecedented opportunities for learning and cooperation (Sal Khan FT Commentary, 2024). But studies also point to increased cases of problematic internet use (PIU) as compulsive or uncontrolled use which disrupts daily life and academic work (Pérez-Juárez et al., 2024). In India, Lukose and Agbeyangi (2025) indicated that more than 25% of engineering students are found to have symptoms of internet dependency, which in many cases is linked to excessive use of social media. Increased reliance on artificial intelligence in learning tasks is raising alarm about decreased critical thinking abilities and lack of creativity. Other international research shows considerable health-related effects, such as digital eye strain, postural strain, and sleep disturbance. This collection of work highlights the need to explore localized forms of internet use and their general significance.

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### **4. Objectives**

This study aims to:

Examine how frequently and in what manner students in the Navsari district use and access the internet.

Determine the major reasons why students use the internet.

Evaluate the perceived advantage and disadvantages, ranging from academic grades to health effects.  
Determine students' familiarity with internet addiction.  
Recommend guidelines for balanced and judicious online engagement.

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## 5. Problem Statement

While internet use has certainly increased learning opportunities for students, it also brings about challenges such as distraction, decreased academic outcomes, and health problems. In semi-urban and rural settings such as Navsari, where technological capacity and awareness might be incommensurate, comprehension of these processes is essential for designing effective intervention efforts. This work fills the void by critically examining how students in Navsari use the internet, what advantages they reap, and what obstacles they encounter.

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## 6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

### 6.1 Gender Distribution

The respondent sample had a balanced gender mix, being slightly biased towards male students. This balance is to ensure the study captures various experiences and perceptions on using the internet.

### 6.2 Age Group

Most of the participants fell in the 16–21 years age bracket, a group that is most active in using digital technologies for academic as well as personal activities.

### 6.3 Educational Level

Most students were pursuing higher secondary and undergraduate studies, indicating that their internet use is closely tied to academic development.

### 6.4 Devices Used

Smartphones emerged as the dominant device for internet access, reflecting affordability and convenience but also raising concerns about prolonged use on small screens.

### 6.5 Frequency of Daily Use

A substantial number of students reported spending over four hours online daily, highlighting risks of dependency and distraction.

### 6.6 Purpose of Use

Internet usage was divided between academic work and leisure, with social media occupying a central position.

### 6.7 Perceived Academic Benefits

Most respondents identified the internet as an important source of learning, providing access to lots of content.

### 6.8 Distractions

Students agreed to interruptions from social media and notifications too often, which undermine concentration and academic performance.

### 6.9 Physical and Mental Health

Eye strain, migraines, and difficulty in getting regular sleep were common mentions by users.

### 6.10 Awareness of Internet Addiction

While students were knowledgeable about the term, fewer recognized addictive behaviours in themselves, indicating normalization of excess use.

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## 7. Results

The research illustrates how the internet, despite being indispensable for education and social life, in unbridled form causes enormous problems. Compulsive daily usage is associated with diminished focus, health issues, and fluctuating academic performance. Though aware of the advantages of online tools, most students are not equipped with proper means of moderation. These findings concur with the necessity of heightened awareness campaigns, digital skills education, and policy actions towards healthier technology use.

## References

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