

NFHS data shows urban-rural, gender gaps in Internet use

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THERE IS a huge gap in terms of urban-rural gap as well as gender gap regarding the use of Internet in 22 states and union territories, according to data collected by the fifth National Family Health Survey (NFHS).

Study shows, less than 4 out of 10 women in urban India and 3 out of 10 women in rural India ever used the Internet.

In 2019, for the first time, the NFHS-5, which collects data on key indicators on population health, family planning and nutrition, sought details on two specific indicators: Percentage of women and men who have ever used the Internet.

An analysis of the data by The Indian Express reveals a telling pattern on the key indicator on the use of the Internet in the country. First, only an average of 42.6 per cent of women ever used the Internet as against an average of 62.16 per cent among the men; second, in urban India, an average 56.81 per cent women ever used the Internet compared to an average 73.76 per cent among the men; and third, a dismal 33.94 per cent women in rural India ever used the Internet as against 55.6 per cent among men.

The data from the 22 states and union territories was collected from 3.07 lakh households.

In urban India, 10 states and three union territories reported more than 50 per cent women who had ever used the Internet: Goa (78.1%), Himachal Pradesh (78.9%), Kerala (64.9%), Maharashtra (54.3%), Manipur (50.8%), Meghalaya (57.8%), Mizoram (83.8%), Nagaland (66.5%), Sikkim (90%), J&K (55%), Ladakh (66.5%), and Lakshwadeep (61.80%).

The five states reporting the lowest percentage of women, who ever used the Internet in urban India were Andhra Pradesh (33.9%), Bihar (38.4%), Tripura (36.6%), Telangana (43.9%) and Gujarat (48.9%).

The percentage of women, who ever used the Internet, significantly dropped in rural India. Only three states and one union territory reported more than 50 per cent women, who had used the Internet – Goa (68.3%), Kerala (57.5%), Sikkim (68.1%), and Ladakh (54%).

The five states reporting the lowest percentage of women, who ever used the Internet in rural India, were: West Bengal (14%), Andhra Pradesh (15.4%), Telangana (15.8%), Tripura (17.7%) and Bihar (17%).

In urban India, Tripura (47%) is the only state that reported less than 50 per cent of men who had ever used the internet. The worst-performing states in urban India for men were Bihar (58.4%), Meghalaya (59.2%), West Bengal (64.6%), Andhra Pradesh (65.1%) and Assam (67.4%).

In rural India, only eight states reported more than 50 per cent men, who had ever used the Internet: Goa (76.6%), Himachal Pradesh (65.1%), Karnataka (55.6%), Kerala (74.2%), Manipur (68.2%), Mizoram (63.9%), Nagaland (55.2%) and Sikkim (69.5%). The five worst-performing states in urban India for men were Assam (37.8%), West Bengal (38.3%), Meghalaya (38.5%), Bihar (39.4%) and Andhra Pradesh (41.5%).

The NFHS-5, provides an indicator, for tracking 30 Sustainable Development Goals that the country aims to achieve by 2030. In the phase 1, the survey provided data on 131 key indicators from 22 states and union territories, with special emphasis on maternal and child health.

Source: Indian Express