

## Role of Social Networking as a Tool of Empowerment of Women Leading Their Life as Housewife

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### ABSTRACT

Now a days, social networking has penetrated into the everyday life of present generation. Among women who lead their life as housewives and spend a major portion of their daily time confined within the four walls of their houses, doing household chores, are adopting such technology for lot of reasons. The present study aims to explore how far they usage of such platform promote empowerment of housewives in West Bengal. The researcher made a cross-sectional survey to obtain reliable data from 292 housewives by using a random sampling technique. The findings drawn through statistical analysis and nonparametric test (Chi- Square Test) uphold there was a moderate relationship between social network usage and housewives empowerment status. It highlights that it requires adequate support and training to be provided to those housewives who use such platform leisure hour during their hour in order to materialise optimum level of empowerment to such women.

**Keywords:** *Social Network, Empowerment, Educational qualification*

Women constitute almost half of the population of India as well as the world. It is unwise to keep them away from the path of progress, as no civilization can move forward keeping almost half of its population mainly the women folk miles away from such an endeavour. But a large part of housewives who play a vital role in keeping the household, are still considered less important to lead the development of the nation as well as the society. Therefore, they are treated differently in comparison to their male counterpart.

But it is not the same with the women folk during the ancient age in the world, especially in India. History suggests that about the beginning of human civilization when human being led their lives in group as forest-dwellers, women led the group. Even during the Vedic Period, they enjoyed honour and respect from the society. Even they could take part in the pursuit of knowledge. During the Buddhist Era, they were permitted in the 'Bihars'.

But during in the middle age, Indian women faced much difficulties and their status in the society decreased. With the arrival of the Europeans, particularly the British, the condition of women folk in India started to change slightly and now a days, after independence, with a

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pace of modern age, women of India, have started to develop rapidly. As the rate of literacy of women has increased, their lifestyle has also improved.

Now they can select almost all the professions in accordance with their own choice and preference and take part in almost all the programs they wish to. In such an hour of progress, there is a wide gap between the actual progress of those women who lead their lives only as housewives or homemakers and those women lead their lives as self-dependent having their own business, government job or any other source of income. Being one of the driving force of the family as well as the society, housewives are not given equal importance in the society in all cases as compared to their male counterpart and those women who can earn themselves. They are often underestimated due to their inability to earn money. Their contributions in family are often ignored. Consequently, many of them suffer from inferiority complex, lack of confidence and pay less attention to their own physical and mental well-being.

During the last few decades, women all over the world as well as in India have come in close contact with various modern technologies. Particularly, with the advent of internet technology, a huge number of women, even the housewives are also using internet by different devices such as computer, laptop and Palmtop mostly by smartphones.

70% to 71% women all over the world (ITU 2024/2025) and 46% women in India use internet in order to meet different purposes. A large part of this woman use social media platform out of total social media uses, Indian women from 34.3% (Data report).

Nowadays the usage of social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram etc, has increased tremendously among housewives due to its multifaced advantage. It helps them to connect their familiar persons, relatives and near and dear ones. It also facilitates them to get rid of loneliness and boredom.

Furthermore, it enables them to explore themselves and express their own creativity by making videos, reels and so on. Also, it may offer them an opportunity to get financial security and become economically self -depended and make their own position in the eye of the society at large.

Thus, the world of social networking sites may open a vista of empowerment to those housewives who can hardly make their own position in the society for serving her family and the society.

### ***Statement of the Problem:***

Since the last decade, different social networking sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn etc. have become so popular that those sites have managed to enter into the core area of our household. The housewives who were so far neglected, suffered from inferiority complex and lack of confidence, has become familiar with such technologies which play significant role in communication, data sharing, skill development and income generation, leading to their social, economic, psychological and decision-making capacity.

### ***Hypotheses:***

Hypotheses have been formulated for the study  
The hypotheses –

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- i) There is no significant relationship between the uses of social networking and empowerment of housewives.
- ii) There is no significant difference of social network usage between urban and rural housewives.
- iii) There is no significant difference between empowerment of rural and urban housewives.
- iv) Housewives' empowerment status doesn't differ with their educational qualification.
- v) Housewives' status of social networking uses doesn't differ with their educational qualification.

### ***Objectives:***

Major objectives of this study are –

- i) Find out the impact of social networking on the empowerment of housewives'.
- ii) To find out various types of usage of social networking by housewives'.
- iii) find out empowerment status of housewives'.
- iv) To unearth the social networking usage status of housewives.
- v) To compare the social networking status of urban and rural housewives.
- vi) To explore the impact of housewives' educational qualification on their social networking status and pattern.
- vii) To evaluate the influence of housewives' educational qualifications on their empowerment status.

### ***Rationale of the Study:***

With the rapid expansion of internet accessibility of different types of social networking platforms have become so popular that they are very easily and fast penetrating into our day-to-day life. Like others a huge number of housewives in West Bengal have devoted themselves' in using Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube due to their multifaceted benefits. Particularly a majority of housewives in West Bengal, have taken such platform as a way of their relief from the stresses they face in their household affairs. Many of them sought refuse to social networking in order to add a little flavour of diversity in their routine bound monotonous household chores. Thus, by and by, it has become an inseparable part of many of their lives. They indulge in social networking for longer period of time. They connect themselves with their friends and relatives, enjoy music, watch videos, shoot pictures and videos and upload those in the social network, make reels, earn money by selling products using social platform. Thus, gradually they are moving forward on the path of self-dependence. They can create their own world where they try to find the meaning of their own life. But at the same time, they are often being targeted on ethical ground. Some questions of their social networking addiction which may lead to negligence of their household work. In such critical juncture, it has become important to bring out the actual effect of social networking on the lives and empowerment status of housewives living in West Bengal.

### ***Significance of the study:***

The Study is significant from various aspect such as,

- i) It may offer realistic data of the actual state of women's empowerment level in West Bengal.
- ii) It may help housewives to understand their own weakness and strength in the field of social network usage.
- iii) It may make them alert about the negative impact of excessive social networking.

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- iv) It has the potential to draw the attention of social activists who work for the empowerment of women and help them guide such housewives in their effort to empower themselves.
- v) It may help to find out digital divide problem between rural and urban housewives (if there is any) and may suggest potential solution for the problem.
- vi) It may find out the gap of empowerment status between rural and urban housewives and draw the attention of concerned authority to diminish such difference.
- vii) It may find out the role of education in the process of women empowerment and may attract the concerned authority to impart the needy housewife's proper education and training in this field.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Research design***

In this study cross sectional survey method was followed to obtain relevant and reliable data from the respondents.

### ***Population***

All the housewives of North 24 parganas formed the population of this study.

### ***Sampling***

Initially the whole population of the District of North 24 parganas was divided into several subdivision and from those subdivisions, some blocks were selected using lottery technique. Even from those blocks (2 Blocks) total 292 housewives were randomly selected using the same technique. While selecting sample, both urban and rural areas were chosen and then data were taken from the selected respondents.

### ***Data collection tools***

The researcher took enough precaution to gather authentic and valid data that could be representative of genuine characteristics of population. Therefore, a teacher made questionnaire was developed in the form of two-dimensional Likert scale. Its validity was determined by taking necessary views of some specialist. Its reliability was verified through a pilot survey in which similar questionnaire was applied.

The survey questionnaire was constructed of 3 parts (part 1, part 2 part 3). Part 1 was formed with 6 items addressing to economic empowerment of housewives. Part 2 dealt with social empowerment, employing of 10 items and part 3 consist of 4 items regarding the mental empowerment of housewives in the perspective of their social network usages.

All the items of part 1, 2 and 3 were made of two dimensions with same positive negative option(yes/no).

The scale only indicates supportive or opposing views regarding the empowerment status and social networking usage pattern of housewives. The researchers had combined aspect of economic empowerment in the form of earning capacity.

## **DISCUSSION**

For the purpose of getting a clear picture of the actual status of housewives, the data were sought from housewives who use social network. All the accumulated data were segregated and tabulated.

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Besides, statistical analysis was utilised and interpreted carefully. The main classifications of data were represented below.

**Table No- 01**

Residential Status	Social Network Uses Pattern			
	Facebook	WhatsApp	Instagram	Total
Urban	88(61.11%)	32(22.22%)	24(16.67%)	144
Rural	100(67.66%)	32(21.62%)	16(10.81%)	148
Total	188(64.38%)	64(24.91%)	40(13.69%)	292

Table number 1 demonstrates numerical as well as percentage distribution of social networking site usage pattern of both urban and rural housewives. The table highlights that out of 144 urban housewives, 88 (61.56%), 32(22.22%) and 24(16.67%) use Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram respectively. At the same time, among 148 rural housewives, 100(67.56%), 32(21.62%) and 16(10.81%) use Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram respectively. It also shows that out of total 292 social network uses, 188 (64.38%), 64(21.91%) and 40(13.69%) choose Facebook WhatsApp and Instagram respectively.

**Table No – 2 (Economic Empowerment)**

Sl. No.	Parameters	Favour			Unfavour		
		Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
1.	Earn ability	20	28	48	124	120	244
2.	Skill Development	64	92	156	80	56	136
3.	To attend online course, seminar, webinar for skill development.	24	16	40	120	132	252
4.	To know Government policies for professional development.	60	76	136	88	68	156
5.	Earning to fulfil self-desire.	60	52	112	88	92	180
6.	Earning to fulfil responsibilities to parents.	72	52	124	72	96	168
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>507 (30.85%)</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>1136 (69.14%)</b>

Table number 2 displays numerical distribution of economic empowerment in terms of 6 parameters. Regarding their earning capability, 48 housewives told that they have earned from social network while 244 housewives express their incapability of earning from social media.

In this table, 156 housewives showed that social network helped them to get professional skill. On the other side, 136 housewives said that they did not use social network for their professional skill development.

Table number 2 also presents that 40 housewives had attended online courses, webinar, seminar, and 252 housewives did not attend any kind of seminar, webinar or any online course which is unfavourable.

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Regarding the knowledge of getting professional development, 136 housewives admitted that they acquire professional knowledge from online platform while 156 denied such benefit from online media.

Again 112 housewives conveyed that they enjoy their capacity to fulfil their desire with their own earning while 180 reported their inability to enjoy such bliss.

Finally, 124 housewives expressed their scope of discharging their responsibility to their parents with their own earning whereas 168 housewives regrated for their inability to fulfil their duty to their parents with their own income.

**Table No- 03 (Social Empowerment)**

Sl. No.	Parameters	Favour			Unfavour		
		Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
1.	Family support	56	84	140	88	64	152
2.	Increasing social contact	72	120	192	72	28	100
3.	To know various social rights about woman	128	128	256	16	20	36
4.	Humiliation in family/society	32	132	164	112	16	128
5.	To reveal talent	120	132	252	24	16	40
6.	Add to same interested group	116	112	228	28	36	64
7.	Empowered in professional skill	100	120	220	44	28	72
8.	Attending woman empowerment campaign	36	52	88	108	96	204
9.	To reduce loneliness	112	144	256	32	04	36
10.	Take care of self	84	188	172	56	64	120
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>1024</b>	<b>1736 (64.58%)</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>952 (35.41%)</b>

Table number 3 presents numerical as well as percentage distribution of housewives' social empowerment in terms of 7 parameters.

In the connection with family support,140 housewives said they get support from their family to do their work which is highly favourable and 152 said they did not get support from their family which is unfavourable.

Table number 3 also displays that 192 housewives were able to increase their social contacts through social network, whereas 100 housewives failed to do so.

Regarding their acquisition of social rights, 256 housewives conveyed that they come to know various social rights for women and married women, while 36 housewives marked this parameter as unfavourable for the reason of their unawareness about their social rights.

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There are some numerical data collected from the table number 7 in the matter of humiliation in family as well as society, 164 housewives confessed that they have faced humiliation in society and family about their humiliation in family as well as society, meanwhile 128 housewives said that they did not face any kind of humiliation in family or society.

Regarding the parameter revelation of talent of housewives, 252 expressed that their various talent can be revealed through social network, while 40 didn't agree with this point and marked it as unfavourable.

Table number 3 also presents the numerical data regarding joining same interested female group. 228 housewives said they have found their same interested group in social media, whereas 64 housewives said that they can't find such group in social media.

In the parameter ability to mix with different people or different group, 220 housewives admitted that social network has increased their ability to mix with different people or different group, at the same time 72 stated their inability to mixing capability with different people or different groups.

On the parameter attending women's empowerment campaign, 88 stated that they had joined various camping for women's empowerment, in the meantime, 204 housewives admitted they had not joined any type of campaign for women's empowerment.

From the table number 3 in the connection with reducing loneliness, 256 housewives accepted that social media has been reducing their loneliness which is highly favourable while 36 reported that parameter as unfavourable. Last parameter of this table deals with talking through social media. In reference to these parameters, 172 housewives confessed that they feel safe to talk in social media and one the other side, 120 housewives said that they did not think social media as a safe way to talk.

**Table No- 04 (Mental Empowerment)**

Parameters	Favour			Unfavour		
	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
To think Scientifically	88	120	208	56	28	84
Take care of Physical / Mental health	132	128	260	12	20	32
Exercise Yoga, Pranayama	76	68	144	68	80	148
Increase confidence	128	136	264	16	12	28
	428	452	876(75%)	152	140	292(25%)

Table number 4 displays numerical as well as percentage distribution of mental empowerment status of housewives in term 6 parameters. Regarding the ability of thinking scientifically, 208 housewives showed that they are capable to think scientifically while 84 reported inabilities to think scientifically.

Table number 6 also presents mental empowerment status of housewives regarding their ability to take care of self-physical and mental health, 260 housewives showed that they are capable to take care of themselves physically and mentally by the use of social network, while 32 reported that they did not get any advantage of social network to take care of themselves physically and mentally.

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Regarding their online exercise, like online yoga, pranayama etc. 144 housewives showed that they are highly inspired to do exercise through online yoga, pranayama by social network while 148 reported inabilities to do exercise yoga, pranayama through social network.

Here we also get some numerical data from table number 4 regarding mental empowerment. In this table 264 housewives showed that they have significantly increase of their confidence level through social content and 28 expressed inabilities to increasing of their confidence level through social content.

### Hypothesis No.1

There is no significant relationship between the usages of social networking and empowerment of housewives.

**Table No. 05 Empowerment Status**

Social Network uses timing	High	Medium	Low	Total
5-7 hours	16 (57.14%)	8 (28.57%)	4 (14.28%)	28 (9.58%)
3-5 hours	52 (17.80%)	16 (5.47%)	44 (15.06%)	112 (38.25%)
1-3 hours	72 (24.65%)	40 (13.69%)	40 (13.69%)	152 (52.05%)
Total	140 (47.94%)	64 (21.91%)	88 (30.13%)	292 (100%)

Table 5 describes the numerical as well as percentage distribution of empowerment status about housewives on the basis of their social networking usage timing. It highlights that out of total 28 housewives who use social network for longest period of time 16 (57.14%), 8(28.57%) and 4(14.28) have appeared as highly, medium and low empowered respectively. Again, out of 112 housewives who use social network for medium period of time, 52 (46.42%), 16 (14.28%), and 44 (39.28%) have become highly, medium, and low empowered respectively. In respect of housewives who use social network for lowest period of time, out of total 152 housewives, 72(47.36%), 40 (26.31%) and 40(26.31%) have been identified as highly, medium and lowest empowered respectively.

### Verification of Hypothesis -1

Calculated value=11.59

Degrees of freedom=4

0.05 level=9.488

0.01=13.27

H1: applying Chi-square test, the authenticity of hypothesis 1 was verified. The result confirmed that the calculated value (11.59) exceeds the table value of 0.05 confidence level as 9.488 but it is less than the critical value at 0.01 as 13.27 confidence level. Therefore, in respect of 0.05 confidence level, the null hypothesis is rejected whereas it is accepted in respect of 0.01 confidence level.

### Hypothesis -2

There is no significant difference of social network usage between rural and urban housewives.

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**Table- 06**

Residential status	Internet uses timings			
	5-7 hours	3-5 hours	1-3 hours	Total
Urban	16 (11.4%)	64 (44.44%)	64 (44.44%)	144
Rural	12 (8.10%)	48 (32.43%)	88 (59.45%)	148
	28	112	152	292

Table number 2 demonstrates the numerical as well as percentage distribution of social networking usage by urban and rural housewives in term of their internet usage timing. It highlights that out of total 144 urban housewives, 16 (11.11%), 64 (44.44%), and 64 (44.44%) use social media for the longest medium and lowest period of time respectively. On the other hand, out of total 148 rural housewives, 12 (8.10%), 48 (32.43%) and 88(59.45%) housewives spend longest, medium and lowest period of time respectively using different types of social media.

### Verification of Hypothesis -2

There is no significant difference of social network usage between rural and urban housewives.

Calculated value=6.56

Degrees of freedom=2

0.05 level =5.991

0.01 level=9.210

H2: In order to verify H0. Chi- square test was used. The result of the test showed that calculated value appeared as 6.56, whereas the critical value of Chi- Square at 0.05 confidence level was 5.991 and 0.01 was 9.210. Therefore, the null hypothesis at 0.05 level was rejected while it was accepted at 0.01 confidence level.

### Hypothesis- 03

There is no significant difference between empowerment of rural and urban housewives.

**Table- 07**

Residential Status	Empowerment Status			
	High	Medium	Low	Total
Urban	64 (44.44%)	28 (19.44%)	52 (36.11%)	144
Rural	80 (54.05%)	32 (21.62%)	36 (24.32%)	148
Total	144	60	88	292

Table number 3 deals with numerical as well as percentage distribution of urban and rural housewives on the basis of their empowerment status. It demonstrates that out of 144 urban housewives 64(44.44%), 28 (19.44%) and 52 (36.11%) showed that they are highly, medium and lower empowered respectively while out of 148 rural housewives, 80 (54.05%), 32 (21.62%) and 36 (24.32%) appeared highly medium and low empowered respectively.

### Verification of hypothesis- 3

There is no significant difference between empowerment of rural and urban housewives.

Calculated value=4.87

Degrees of freedom=2

0.05 level=5.991

0.01 level=9.210

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In respect of hypothesis 3, Chi-Square test established that there was no significant difference between empowerment of rural and urban housewives in 0.05 and 0.01 level of confidence, the hypothesis was accepted. So, this test clearly showed that there was no significant difference between empowerment of rural and urban housewives.

### Hypothesis number 4

Housewife's empowerment status does not differ with the educational qualification.

**Table- 08**

Educational Status	Empowerment Status			
	High	Medium	Low	Total
Upto MP	88 (61.11%)	32 (22.22%)	24 (16.66%)	144
Above MP	60 (40.54%)	64 (43.24%)	24 (16.21%)	148
Total	148	96	48	292

Table number 4 depicts numerical as well as percentage distribution of empowerment status of housewives based on their educational qualification. It demonstrates that out of total 144 housewives who possess up to Madhyamika educational qualification, 88(61.11%) 32 (22.22%) and 24 (16.66%) are highly, medium and low empowered respectively while 148 housewives who have above Madhyamika qualification 60 (40.54%),64(43.24%) and 24(16.21%) have become highly empowered, medium empowered and lowest empowered respectively.

### Verification of hypothesis - 04

Housewives' empowerment status does not differ with their educational qualification.

Calculated value=15.908

Degrees of freedom=2

0.05 level =5.991

0.01 level=9.210

In respect of hypothesis 4, Chi-Square test verified that there was significant difference on housewives empowerment status with their educational qualification as in 0.05 and 0.01 confidence level were rejected.

### Hypothesis number-5

Housewives' status of social networking usage doesn't differ with their educational qualification.

**Table No- 09**

Educational Status	Social Network Uses timings			
	5-7 hours	3-5 hours	1-3 hours	Total
Upto MP	20 (12.19%)	52 (31.70%)	92 (56.09%)	164
Above MP	8 (6.25%)	64 (50%)	56 (43.75%)	128
Total	28	116	48	292

Table number 9 describes the numerical as well as percentage distribution of social networking usage by those housewives having educational qualification up to Madhyamika and those who have above Madhyamika academic qualification. The table reflects that among total 164 housewives having up to Madhyamika educational qualification, 20 (12.19%), 52 (31.70%) and 92 (56.09%) use social network for longest, medium and lowest

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period of time respectively. Again, out of total 128 housewives who possess above Madhyamika educational qualification, 8 (6.25%) 64 (50%) 56 (43.75%) use social media for longest, medium and lowest period of time respectively.

### **Verification of hypothesis -5**

Housewives' status of social networking usage doesn't differ with their educational qualification.

Calculated value=223.78

Degrees of freedom=2

0.05 level =5.991

0.01 level=9.210

In respect of hypothesis 5, Chi-Square test established that there was significant difference between housewives social networking usage and educational qualification of housewives because in 0.05 and 0.01 confidence level, both were rejected.

### **Findings**

The researchers endeavoured to collect relevant, reliable and valid data to have a clear insight of the actual status of empowerment of housewives residing in the district of North 24 Parganas. But only Data collection is not enough to ensure that objectives of the study. Therefore, adequate data was collected from the sample from November 2025 to January 2026 and analysed and synthesized using various statistics both parametric and nonparametric and the major findings yield as-

- 47.94% housewives enjoyed high empowerment while 30% housewives reported lowest empowerment.
- Among longest social networking user housewives, 57.14% were highly empowered while 14.28% showed lowest empowerment status.
- Among medium social network users' housewives, 17.80% were highly empowered 15.06% reported lowest empowerment status.
- Among those housewives who used social network for lowest period of time, 24.65% were highly empowered whereas 13.69% were slightly empowered
- Among total urban housewives, 11.11% used social network for longest period of time while only 44.44% used it for the lowest period of time.
- Among total rural housewives 8.10% used social network for longest period whereas 59.45% used it for lowest period time.
- Among 144 housewives who have studied up to Madhyamik 61.11% were highly empowered while 16.66% were slightly empowered.
- Among total 148 housewives who have above Madhyamik qualification, 40.54% were highly and 16.21% were lowly empowered.
- Among total responses, given by housewives from urban and rural areas 30.85% exhibited economic empowerment whereas 69.14% housewives proved were not economically empowered with the use of social network.
- Among total responses provided by both rural and urban housewives, 64.58% expressed social empowerment while 35.41% expressed that they were not socially empowered with the use of social network.

Out of total responses conveyed by that both urban and rural housewives, 75% revealed that they achieved mental stability and health using social network while only 25% housewives complained that they fail to achieve it by the use of social network.

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As per 0.01 significance level, hypothesis testing proved that there was no significant relationship between social networking usage and empowerment of housewives. Further it was proved that on the basis of 0.05 significance level there was significant relationship between usage of social networking and empowerment of housewives.

- It was inferred through hypothesis testing; there was no significant difference of usage between rural and urban housewives.
- It was established that there was no significant difference between empowerment of urban and rural housewives.
- Housewives' empowerment status differs with their educational qualification
- Housewives' social networking usage status differs with their educational qualification.

### **CONCLUSION**

The findings of the study indicate that there is a moderate relationship between housewives' empowerment and their social network usage. "There is no significant relationship between housewives' empowerment and social networking usage" was accepted at 0.01 significance level while it was rejected at 0.05 level of significance. At the same time, numerical calculation of social network usage and empowerment status of housewives showed that major part of the housewives who use social network for longest period and who use it for lowest period of time or highly empowered. Therefore, the findings further highlight that though the housewives showed less empowered, economically they proved significantly in empowered socially and physically. In respect of their educational qualification the exhibited higher level of empowerment irrespective of their educational status. Therefore, it is seen that the housewives are gradually getting empowered with the use of social network. It is clear that the housewives in West Bengal are making progress with aid of social networking platform but it is not quite satisfactory. They will have to go a long way in this field to develop their professional skill and encourage them to participate in webinars, online seminars and discussion forum enhance to their empowerment.

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