



Impact of Social Media and Internet on Muslim Women: A Study of Socio-Cultural and Religious Change in Birbhum District.

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Abstract

In the twenty-first century, social media and internet technology have become important tools in shaping social, cultural and religious life. This study examines the impact of social media and internet use on Muslim women with special reference to socio-cultural and religious aspects. A field survey was conducted in Domdoma Gram Panchayat under Suri-II Block of Birbhum district, West Bengal. A total of 100 Muslim women aged 15–45 years were selected using random and purposive sampling methods. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analysed using simple percentage method.

The findings of the study show that a large number of respondents use smartphones, internet and social media. The use of digital technology has increased social awareness, improved family communication and enhanced interest in education. It has also contributed to the growth of religious knowledge through online lectures and digital platforms. However, the study also identifies challenges such as digital divide, limited participation in online education, cultural concerns and risks related to online safety.

The study concludes that social media and internet technology play a significant role in transforming the socio-cultural and religious life of Muslim women in rural areas. While technology offers new opportunities for empowerment and learning, its effective use depends on digital literacy, social acceptance and responsible usage. The study highlights the need for inclusive policies to ensure safe and meaningful digital participation of Muslim women.

Keywords: Social media, Internet, Muslim women, Birbhum, socio-cultural change, religious life

1. Introduction

In the twenty-first century, social media and internet technology have become an integral part of everyday life. These technologies influence social, cultural, educational and religious activities. Muslim women are increasingly using smartphones, internet services and social media platforms for communication and learning.

Traditionally, Muslim women's social participation was limited due to cultural practices and domestic responsibilities. However, digital connectivity has created new opportunities for education, communication and religious learning. At the same time, technology also raises concerns related to privacy, cultural values and moral behaviour. Therefore, it is important to study the impact of social media and internet technology on Muslim women.

2. Review of Related Literature

Recent studies have increasingly focused on the relationship between digital media and Muslim women, although most of this research is centred on urban areas and lacks focus on rural contexts like Birbhum district. Parveen et al. (2024) examined the role of social media in empowering Muslim women in India and found that platforms such as Facebook and Instagram enhance awareness of social and political issues and encourage participation in public discourse. However, they also noted that structural barriers such as low digital literacy, language limitations and socio-cultural restrictions continue to limit the active participation of many women, especially in rural areas. Similarly, Khan (2024), in a study based in the United Kingdom, observed that Muslim women use social media platforms to make independent decisions, particularly in areas like travel, indicating that digital platforms can reshape traditional gender roles and decision-making processes.

The issue of digital divide has been widely discussed by scholars. Nair and Gupta (2024) highlighted that access to digital devices among Muslim women in rural India is significantly lower compared to other groups, mainly due to socio-economic disadvantages and patriarchal control over technology. Supporting this view, the study titled *Digital Divide and Educational Access* (2024) emphasised that economic hardship, lack of education and conservative social norms restrict Muslim women's access to the internet. In the context of West Bengal, Talukdar and Mete (2022) found that although digital literacy among Muslim homemakers in Kolkata is gradually increasing, access remains uneven and limited. Earlier reports such as *Educational Status of Muslim Women in Birbhum* (2012) and

the Khayrasole study (2023) also indicate that low literacy and poor socio-economic conditions further deepen digital exclusion in districts like Birbhum.

Scholars have also explored how social media contributes to the empowerment of Muslim women. The study *Muslim Women in the Digital Age* (2025) suggests that digital platforms provide opportunities for education, entrepreneurship and social interaction. Women are increasingly using social media for small-scale business activities, which helps improve their financial independence and social status. However, this empowerment is not uniform, as many women still face restrictions from family and society.

The impact of digital media on religious life has been discussed by several researchers. Nisa (2019) argued that the internet has created new spaces where Muslim women can explore and express their religious identity. Online platforms allow women to access Islamic teachings, listen to lectures and participate in religious discussions. This has reduced the monopoly of traditional religious authorities and enabled women to engage directly with religious knowledge. Later studies, such as *Muslim Women in the Digital Age* (2025) and *Muslim Women's Representation and Resistance* (2026), further highlight that digital media has diversified religious understanding, with some women adopting more modern interpretations while others become more conservative.

At the same time, scholars have raised concerns about the risks associated with social media use. *Countering Backlash* (2023) reported that Muslim women in India often face online harassment, including hate speech, threats and identity-based attacks. Parveen et al. (2024) also discussed incidents such as “Sulli Deals” and “Bulli Bai,” which demonstrate how Muslim women are targeted through organised online campaigns. These studies show that digital platforms can expose women to new forms of discrimination and surveillance. Furthermore, research indicates that misinformation and negative stereotypes about Muslim women are frequently spread through social media, which can reinforce social prejudice and cultural misunderstanding.

Despite the growing body of literature, there is a clear gap in research focusing on rural Muslim women in West Bengal, particularly in Birbhum district. Most studies have concentrated on urban populations or broader national contexts. Existing research in Birbhum mainly deals with education and socio-economic conditions but does not adequately address the impact of social media and internet technology on socio-cultural and religious life. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill this gap by examining how Muslim women in Domdoma Gram Panchayat negotiate social, cultural and religious changes through digital media. This makes the study significant in understanding the role of technology in shaping the lives of rural Muslim women.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the use of social media and internet among Muslim women
2. To analyse the socio-cultural impact of modern technology
3. To study the impact of technology on religious life
4. To identify opportunities and challenges of digital technology
5. To understand the role of technology in empowerment

4. Study Area

The study was conducted in Domdoma Gram Panchayat under Suri-II Block in Birbhum district, West Bengal. The area is mainly rural with a significant Muslim population. Most women are engaged in household work, agriculture and small-scale economic activities. Access to smartphones and internet has increased in recent years.

5. Methodology

The study is based on primary data collected through field survey. A total of 100 Muslim women aged between 15 and 45 years were selected. Random sampling method was used to select respondents. Purposive sampling was also used to include women from different age groups within 15–45 years.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire. Questions were related to social media use, socio-cultural changes and religious life. The collected data were analysed using simple percentage method.

6. Limitations of the Study

Although the study provides useful insights into the impact of social media and internet technology on Muslim women, it has some limitations.

First, the study is based on a small sample size of 100 respondents, which may not fully represent the entire population of Muslim women in Birbhum district or other regions. Therefore, generalisation of the findings should be made with caution.

Second, the data were collected from a single geographical area, namely Domdoma Gram Panchayat under Suri-II Block. As socio-cultural conditions vary from place to place, the findings may not reflect the situation in other rural or urban areas.

Third, the study relies on self-reported data collected through a structured questionnaire. Respondents may have provided socially desirable answers or may not have fully understood some questions, which can affect the accuracy of the data.

Fourth, the study is limited to quantitative analysis using percentage method. It does not include in-depth qualitative methods such as interviews or case studies, which could provide deeper understanding of personal experiences and perceptions.

Fifth, the study mainly focuses on social, cultural and religious aspects of technology use. Other important areas such as psychological impact, political participation and long-term economic effects are not covered.

Finally, the study reflects the situation during a specific time period. As technology and social media are rapidly changing, the findings may become outdated over time.

7. Delimitation of the Study

This study is limited to a specific geographical area and group of respondents. It was conducted only in Domdoma Gram Panchayat under Suri-II Block of Birbhum district, West Bengal. Therefore, the findings may not be applicable to other regions with different socio-cultural conditions.

The study focuses only on Muslim women aged between 15 and 45 years. Women outside this age group were not included. Hence, the results do not represent the views of older or younger women.

The sample size is limited to 100 respondents, selected through random and purposive sampling methods. Due to this limited sample, the findings may not fully represent the entire Muslim female population of the district.

The study mainly examines the impact of social media and internet technology on socio-cultural and religious life. Other aspects such as political participation, detailed economic analysis and psychological impact are not covered in this study. The data are based on self-reported responses collected through a structured questionnaire. Therefore, there may be chances of personal bias or limited understanding among respondents.

Finally the study is conducted within a specific time period, so it reflects the situation at that time only. Changes in technology and society over time may produce different results in the future.

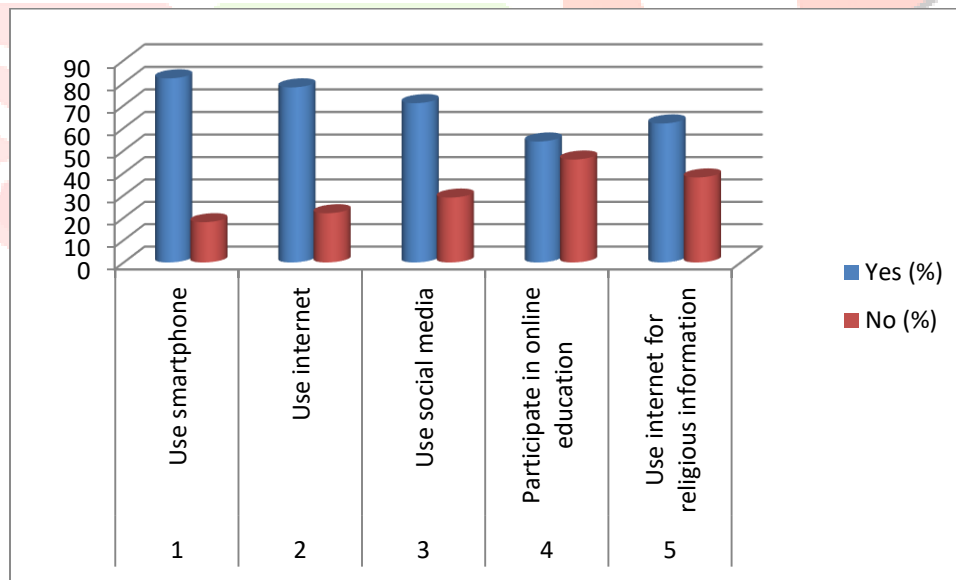
8. Analysis and Findings

The present section analyses the data collected from 100 Muslim women respondents of Domdoma Gram Panchayat under Suri-II Block in Birbhum District. The data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analysed using simple percentage method. The purpose of this section is to examine the impact of social media and internet technology on the socio-cultural and religious life of Muslim women.

The analysis focuses on key areas such as social awareness, educational interest, family communication, cultural change and employment opportunities. It also examines the role of digital technology in shaping religious practices and increasing religious knowledge among the respondents. The findings are presented in tabular form for clarity and better understanding.

Overall, this section attempts to identify the major patterns, trends and responses of the participants regarding the use of social media and internet in their daily lives.

Figure 1: Use of Smartphone, Internet and Social Media among Muslim Women



Source: Author's Field Survey, Domdoma GP, Suri-II Block, Birbhum District, West Bengal (2025).

The figure presents the pattern of use of smartphone, internet and social media among Muslim women in the study area. The data indicate that a majority of respondents are connected with digital technology in their daily lives.

It is observed that 82 percent of respondents use smartphones, while only 18 percent do not use them. This shows a high level of access to mobile technology among Muslim women. Similarly, 78 percent of respondents use the internet, indicating that digital connectivity is quite widespread in the study area.

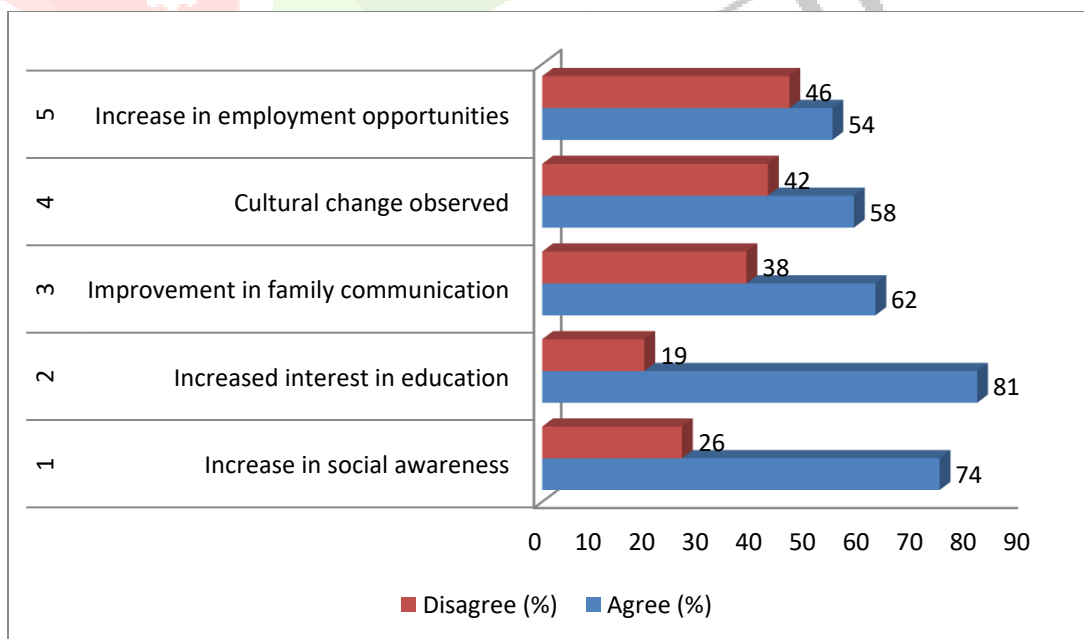
The use of social media is also significant, with 71 percent of respondents actively using platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and YouTube. However, 29 percent of respondents are still not engaged with social media, which may be due to lack of access, awareness or social restrictions.

In terms of education, only 54 percent of respondents participate in online education, while 46 percent do not. This suggests that although digital access is relatively high, its use for educational purposes is still moderate. Factors such as lack of digital skills, time constraints and family responsibilities may influence this pattern.

The figure further shows that 62 percent of respondents use the internet for religious information, while 38 percent do not. This indicates that digital technology is also being used as a source of religious learning, though not by all respondents.

Overall, the figure reveals that Muslim women in the study area are increasingly adopting smartphones, internet and social media. However, the use of digital technology for education and religious purposes is comparatively lower, highlighting the need for greater awareness and digital literacy.

Figure 2: Socio-Cultural Impact of Social Media and Internet Technology on Muslim Women



Source: Author's Field Survey, Domdoma GP, Suri-II Block, Birbhum District, West Bengal (2025).

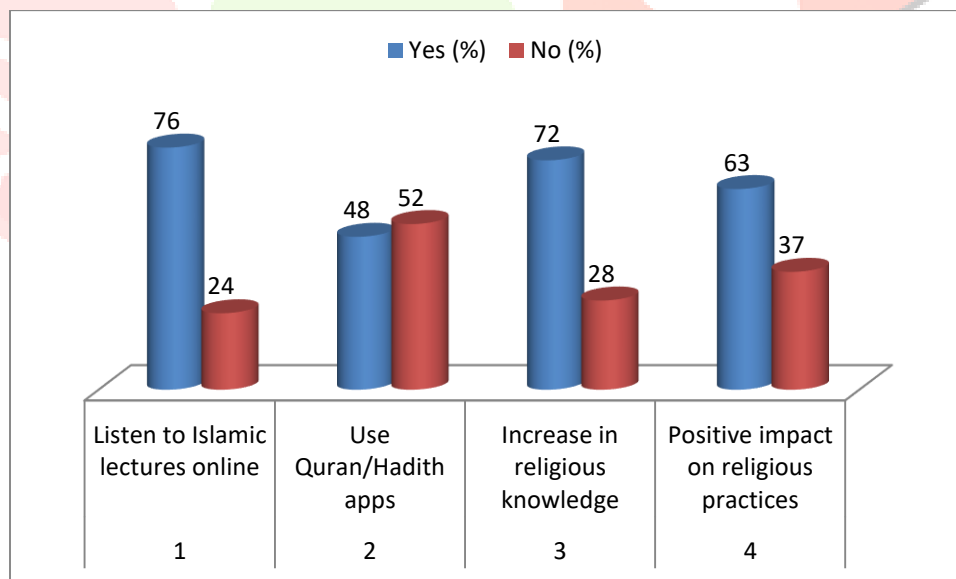
Figure 2 shows the socio-cultural impact of social media and internet technology on Muslim women in the study area. The data indicate that 74 percent respondents agreed that social awareness increased due to social media use. This suggests that women are becoming more informed about social issues and community development.

A large majority of respondents (81 percent) reported increased interest in education. Online learning platforms, videos and digital resources encourage women to continue their education. About 62 percent respondents stated that family communication improved through mobile phones and messaging apps.

The figure also shows that 58 percent respondents observed cultural change due to exposure to digital media. This indicates that modern technology influences lifestyle and social values. Additionally, 54 percent respondents agreed that technology increased employment opportunities. Social media helps women start small businesses and home-based work.

Overall, the findings indicate that social media and internet technology have a significant socio-cultural impact on Muslim women.

Figure 3 : Impact of Social Media and Internet Technology on Religious Life of Muslim Women



Source: Author's Field Survey, Domdoma GP, Suri-II Block, Birbhum District, West Bengal (2025).

Figure 3 shows the impact of social media and internet technology on the religious life of Muslim women. The data indicate that 76 percent respondents listen to Islamic lectures online. This shows that digital media is widely used for religious learning.

However, only 48 percent respondents use Quran and Hadith apps, while 52 percent do not use them. This suggests moderate use of religious applications. A large majority, 72 percent respondents, reported that their religious knowledge increased through internet use.

Furthermore, 63 percent respondents stated that technology had a positive impact on their religious practices. This indicates that social media and internet technology help Muslim women maintain religious activities.

Overall, the findings suggest that modern technology positively influences religious awareness and practices.

9. Discussion

The study shows that social media and internet technology have transformed the socio-cultural and religious life of Muslim women. Digital communication has improved social awareness and family interaction. Technology also encourages education and skill development. Religious learning has become easier through online lectures and digital content. Women can access Islamic knowledge from home. Economic opportunities through online platforms also contribute to empowerment.

However, some respondents expressed concern about cultural change and privacy issues. Exposure to global media may influence traditional values. Therefore, digital literacy and responsible use of technology are necessary.

9.1. Use of Social Media and Internet among Muslim Women

The survey shows that most Muslim women use smartphones and internet services. Social media platforms help them communicate with family members, access educational content and obtain religious information. Many respondents reported using YouTube for Islamic lectures and WhatsApp for social communication.

The use of internet has increased awareness about education, health and government welfare schemes. Online education has also encouraged women to continue learning from home. These findings indicate that modern technology is expanding opportunities for Muslim women.

9.2. Socio-Cultural Impact of Social Media and Internet

Social media and internet technology have influenced the socio-cultural life of Muslim women in several ways. The survey data show that 74 percent respondents agreed that social awareness increased

due to social media use. Technology helps women stay informed about social issues and community development.

A large majority of respondents reported increased interest in education. Online videos, digital courses and educational platforms motivate women to pursue learning. Technology has also improved family communication. Women can easily stay connected with relatives through mobile phones and messaging apps.

The study also indicates cultural changes. Exposure to global media introduces new ideas about lifestyle, fashion and social roles. Some respondents felt that digital media influenced traditional values. However, many women use technology to preserve cultural practices such as cooking, embroidery and handicrafts.

The data also show moderate impact on employment opportunities. Online platforms allow women to start small businesses from home. They sell clothes, handicrafts and food products using social media. This increases their economic participation and family status.

9.3. Impact on Religious Life

Modern technology has significantly influenced the religious life of Muslim women. Many respondents reported listening to Islamic lectures online. YouTube and other platforms provide easy access to religious scholars and teachings. Women can learn about Quran, Hadith and Islamic practices from home.

The study also found that technology increased religious knowledge. Online religious content helps women understand faith more clearly. Some respondents use Quran apps and Islamic websites for daily learning. Technology also helps women follow prayer time and religious events.

However, some respondents expressed concerns about online religious interpretation. Different opinions on social media sometimes create confusion. Therefore, authentic sources and proper guidance are important. Overall, the study indicates that social media has a positive influence on religious awareness.

9.4. Economic and Educational Empowerment

Social media and internet technology have created new opportunities for Muslim women. Online education platforms allow them to develop skills. Digital literacy helps them participate in economic activities. Many women run home-based businesses using social media.

Online marketplaces and digital payment systems make it easier to sell products. This improves their financial independence. Technology also helps women access government schemes and employment information. These changes contribute to empowerment and social participation.

9.5. Challenges of Social Media and Internet Use

Despite many benefits, technology also creates challenges. Excessive use of social media may affect family relationships. Privacy concerns and cyber harassment are important issues. In conservative societies, social media use sometimes raises moral debates.

Exposure to global culture may also create identity conflicts. Some families worry about cultural values and modesty. Misinformation and fake religious content are additional challenges. Therefore, awareness and digital literacy are necessary for safe technology use.

10. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following policy suggestions are recommended to improve the positive use of social media and internet technology among Muslim women:

- I. **Promote Digital Literacy Programmes:** Government and non-government organisations should organise digital literacy training for Muslim women, especially in rural areas. This will help them use smartphones, internet and social media effectively for education, communication and economic activities.
- II. **Improve Access to Digital Infrastructure:** Better internet connectivity and affordable smartphones should be ensured in rural areas like Birbhum. Public Wi-Fi centres and community digital centres can help women access online services easily.
- III. **Encourage Online Education and Skill Development:** Special online courses and training programmes should be introduced for Muslim women to improve their educational level and skills. This will increase their opportunities for employment and self-reliance.
- IV. **Support Women's Digital Entrepreneurship:** Government schemes and financial support should be provided to encourage Muslim women to start small online businesses. Training in e-commerce, digital marketing and online payment systems will help them earn income from home.
- V. **Ensure Online Safety and Awareness:** Awareness programmes should be conducted to educate women about cyber security, privacy protection and safe use of social media. Strict legal action should be taken against online harassment and cybercrime.
- VI. **Promote Responsible Use of Social Media:**
Families, schools and community leaders should encourage responsible and balanced use of social media. This will help maintain cultural values while benefiting from modern technology.

- VII. **Provide Authentic Religious Content Online:** Religious institutions and scholars should create reliable online content in simple language. This will help Muslim women access correct religious knowledge and avoid misinformation.
- VIII. **Strengthen Community Support Systems:** Local organisations and self-help groups should support Muslim women in using digital technology. Community-based initiatives can help reduce social barriers and increase participation.
- IX. **Encourage Government Welfare Awareness through Digital Media:** Government departments should use social media platforms to spread awareness about welfare schemes, health services and educational opportunities among Muslim women.
- X. **Focus on Inclusive Policy Making :**
Policies should consider the specific needs of Muslim women, especially in rural areas. Gender-sensitive and community-based approaches are necessary for effective digital inclusion.

11. Conclusion

The field survey conducted in Domdoma Gram Panchayat reveals that social media and internet technology have a significant impact on Muslim women aged 15–45 years. Technology has improved social awareness, education, communication and religious knowledge. It has also created opportunities for economic participation. At the same time, challenges related to cultural values and digital safety remain. Proper awareness and responsible use of technology are essential. Overall, social media and internet technology play an important role in empowering Muslim women and transforming their socio-cultural and religious life. Social media and internet technology have brought significant changes in the socio-cultural and religious life of Muslim women. These technologies have increased access to education, improved communication and enhanced religious knowledge. They also provide opportunities for economic participation and social awareness. However, technology also creates challenges related to privacy, morality and cultural identity. The key issue is responsible use of technology. With proper education, family support and digital awareness, social media can become a powerful tool for empowerment.

The study concludes that modern technology plays a transformative role in the lives of Muslim women. It helps them balance tradition and modernity while improving their social, cultural and religious participation

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