ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 11| Issue: 12| December 2025|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

TO STUDY THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL FINANCE USAGE ON THE FINANCIAL INCLUSION AND LITERACY OF WORKING AND NON-WORKING WOMEN IN THE BARDOLI TALUKA

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Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra25162
DOI No: 10.36713/epra25162

ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of digital finance in India is changing the way people access, manage and use financial services. "Even though much is written about urban and working-class individuals around financial inclusion, there has been less of a focus on working and non-working women in semi-urban and rural areas. This paper analyses the influence of the usage of digital finance on financial inclusion and literacy among the non-working women in the Bardoli Taluka, Gujarat. Measuring the degree of digital financial adoption, challenges encountered and its impact on taking better financial decisions, the research shows how tools like mobile banking, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), e-wallets and digital savings platforms are enabling working and non-working women to become more financially independent and active. The results imply the role of digital finance as an enabler in minimising the gender gap in financial access, but challenges such as levels of digital literacy and trust, and infrastructural deficits, persist.

KEYWORDS: *Digital Finance, Financial Inclusion, Financial Decision-Making*

1. INTRODUCTION

The global shift to digital has transformed the way financial products and services are accessed in India. There has been remarkable digital finance facility adoption pressure from the country in the past decade -on mobile banking, online wallet apps, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), internet banking and microfinance apps. These developments have helped to lower transaction costs, increase transparency and broaden the reach of formal financial services to large swathes of society. Although digital finance has received the influx of policy attention and academic interest, it is less clear how it affects certain segments such as housewives. Home-makers, although being significant participants in running household finances, are typically excluded from mainstream financial systems, because of low levels of literacy about money issues, lower levels of confidence with technology and restrictive cultural norms.

The policy priority in India has been for financial inclusion, which is defined as the opening of bank accounts by everyone and availability at affordable cost access to basic financial services. "As part of the government programs such as Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Digital India Mission and Bardoli area of Gujarat, having both urban and semi-urban attributes, offers an excellent setting to explore the nexus between digital finance and financial inclusion of the working and non-working women . A lot of the households in this region are headed by women, and it is these foreign exchange earners who also make the financial decisions. We have striven to formalize this as well. The uptake of digital finance by such working and non-working women could empower them with decision-making power and financial literacy in the short run, let alone their overall inclusive participation on the economic front. For instance, using UPI to conduct daily transactions or mobile banking for savings could expose working and non-working women to formal financial practices, and thus gradually enhance their understanding of interest rates, management of credit, and the relevance of insurance.

Digital finance's integration in working and non-working women lives is also about more than just convenience. It has the capacity to enhance social and economic empowerment – by promoting independence, reducing dependency on intermediaries 1, and building confidence in money management. Meanwhile, concerns such as fear of cyber fraud and lack of knowledge about Anglo or technical terms and digital safety continue to be major obstacles. These issues must be dealt with through targeted awareness drives, community-based training and the development of applications in regional languages.

In this backdrop, the current study attempts to identify the influence of utilization of digital finance on financial inclusion and literacy of working and non-working women in the Bardoli area. The study will examine the levels of use, digital finance in decision-making and critical barriers to its use. By studying working and non-working women , the paper aims to add to a wide literature on gender, technology and inclusive development in India.

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2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Mishra, D. (2024) in his study "Digital and Financial Literacy for Uplifting Women and Communities" aims to synthesize up-to-date evidence on the impact of digital financial literacy (DFL) programs on women's financial inclusion and decision-making. Following a systematic literature review design, researchers reported results from a pool of empirical studies, each selected through purposive search of documents, with findings reported as an equivalent composite sample (100% standardized for comparison). The target population included women, such as home-based workers in both urban and rural settings. The review found that DFL programs significantly increased access to and effective use of digital financial services among women. However, continued support appears necessary to ensure long-term behavior change, and there is a need for more locally adapted content.
- Chatterjee, P. (2024) conducted a study titled "Digital Literacy as a Catalyst for Financial Inclusion among NON WORKING WOMEN." The objective was to measure how digital skills contribute to inclusion. A descriptive research design and simple random sampling were used with 150 NON-WORKING WOMEN in Kolkata. The population comprised middle-class non-working women. Results indicated that digital knowledge enhanced comfort with online savings. The conclusion highlighted digital skills as foundational to inclusion.
- Patel, N. (2025). Role of Digital Finance in Promoting Financial Inclusion among Housewives in Surat – a Case Study 64-71. The purpose was to investigate the leverage of mobile banking as well a e-wallets towards enhancing financial literacy and inclusiveness amongst NON WORKING WOMEN. A descriptive research design was retained with simple random sampling and a sample size of 120 NON WORKING WOMEN. The sampling population comprised non-working married women aged between 25 to 55 years in urban Surat. The research found that digital finance apps strongly improved savings behaviours and self-confidence for NON-WORKING WOMEN. they conclusions indicated that fintech platforms are key in empowering excluded women financially.
- Bhatt, A. (2025) had undertaken the study entitled "A Study on Digital Finance Penetration and Financial Inclusion among NON WORKING WOMEN." The objective of the research was to quantify the level of use of digital finance. descriptive research design and by stratified random sampling using 120 NON WORKING WOMEN as respondents. The study population was non-working women of Rajkot. The findings reveal that digital engagements have a significant and positive impact on financial inclusion indices. The conclusion recommended community-level awareness campaigns.
- Rani, T. (2024) conducted a study titled "Exploring the Relationship between Digital Literacy and Financial Empowerment among NON WORKING WOMEN." The objective was to assess how digital awareness influences empowerment. The study used descriptive design and purposive sampling with 130 NON WORKING WOMEN. The population included women from Haryana. The study found that digital literacy strongly correlated with confidence in financial decisions. The conclusion suggested local NGOs collaborate in digital literacy training.
- Kapoor, D. (2024) conducted a study titled "Linking Digital Finance Usage to Financial Inclusion: Evidence from Indian NON WORKING WOMEN." The objective was to explore how digital finance usage affects inclusion. The study used a descriptive research design and random sampling with 130 NON WORKING WOMEN from Delhi. The population included urban middle-income women. Findings showed a significant rise in access to banking facilities. The conclusion emphasized policy-level support for rural expansion.
- Rao, S. (2024) conducted a study titled "Digital Banking and Women's Financial Empowerment in South India." The objective was to evaluate the relationship between digital finance usage and financial decision-making among NON WORKING WOMEN. The study followed a descriptive research design with a stratified random sampling technique and a sample size of 150 NON WORKING WOMEN. The population consisted of women from middle-income households in Tamil Nadu. Findings indicated that regular use of UPI and mobile banking enhanced women's ability to manage budgets. The conclusion emphasized training initiatives for NON WORKING WOMEN to deepen digital literacy.
- Lopez, M., & Rivera, T. (2023) in their study titled "Mobile Banking Adoption and Financial Awareness among NON WORKING WOMEN in Latin America" explored how digital finance applications influence financial literacy levels. The research adopted a quantitative design using simple random sampling with a sample size of 100 women from Mexico City. Findings revealed that mobile banking improved budgeting and savings habits among NON WORKING WOMEN. The conclusion suggested targeted digital finance training for low-income women.
- Chen, Y. (2025) conducted a study titled "Digital Financial Literacy and Inclusion among Chinese Rural Women." The research aimed to evaluate the extent of digital finance awareness and usage among NON WORKING WOMEN in rural China. Employing a descriptive-correlation design and cluster sampling, data were gathered from 120 respondents. The findings indicated that digital payment apps like Alipay boosted women's ability to manage household finances independently. The study concluded that continuous digital training can bridge gender gaps in financial inclusion.
- Brown, E., & Davis, K. (2023) carried out research titled "E-Wallet Usage and Financial Awareness among NON WORKING WOMEN in the UK." The study aimed to explore how e-wallet usage impacts financial decision-making. A descriptive survey method with systematic random sampling was used for 100 NON WORKING WOMEN in London. Results showed that digital finance improved women's budgeting and savings discipline. The

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study concluded that e-wallets foster better money management and reduce dependency.

- Kim, H. (2025) in her research titled "Smartphone-Based Financial Literacy Programs and Women's Empowerment in South Korea" analyzed how mobile learning impacts NON WORKING WOMEN' financial inclusion. A survey design with simple random sampling of 100 participants was used. Results showed improved investment awareness and decision-making among women after exposure to digital finance apps. The study concluded that mobile education tools significantly promote inclusion.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

PROBLEM STATEMENT

While there is an increasing availability of digital financial services, a majority of the working and non-working women in the Bardoli Taluka continue to experience mistreatment and exclusion from access and effective use of such services, owing to poor financial literacy and awareness. Although digital finance can improve financial inclusion and facilitate working and non-working women's roles in household financial decisions, its effect on their level of financial literacy and inclusion is uncertain. This void requires a depth investigation into how the usage of digital finance is affecting the financial inclusion of their group, i.e. working and non-working women in Bardoli.

OBJECTIVE

1. To analyse the awareness and utilisation of digitalised finance by the homemaker in Bardoli
2. To understand the effect of digital finance use on the financial inclusion of housewives.
3. To analyse the impact of digital finance on the financial literacy of housewives.
4. To highlight the issues and obstacles experienced by housewives in using DFS.

RESEARCH DESIGN

For this research sample size is 100 WORKING AND non-working women from Bardoli Taluka. The study is descriptive, and the data have been collected by a well-structured questionnaire from 100 working and non-working women in the Bardoli Taluka. Further, the study is secondary in nature and has gathered data from trading sites, journals, articles, books and the annual report.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Sample technique: Non-probability convenience and random sampling.

Research Instrument: Structured questionnaire.

TOOLS FOR DATA ANALYSIS

For analysis of data, frequency tables & pie charts have been used.

RESEARCH GAP

WORKING AND NON-WORKING WOMEN form a significant section of society who, despite being central to household financial management, often remain excluded from formal financial systems. With the rise of digital finance in India, there is an opportunity to bring WORKING AND non-working women into the mainstream of financial inclusion. Studying its impact in the Bardoli Taluka is important because it will highlight whether digital finance truly enhances their financial literacy and participation, or whether barriers such as lack of awareness and digital skills continue to limit their involvement. The findings will provide valuable insights for policymakers, financial institutions, and educators to design targeted programs that empower WORKING AND NON-WORKING WOMEN, thereby contributing to inclusive growth and stronger community development.

SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study focuses on understanding the impact of digital finance on the financial inclusion and literacy of WORKING AND non-working women in the Bardoli Taluka. It covers the awareness, usage, and adoption of digital financial tools such as UPI, mobile wallets, and net banking among WORKING AND non-working women. The research examines how these tools influence their financial knowledge, decision-making, and access to formal financial services. The study also identifies the challenges and barriers faced by WORKING AND WORKING WOMEN in using digital finance, providing insights for designing targeted interventions. While the primary focus is on WORKING AND NON-WORKING WOMEN, the findings may also inform policies and programs for similar semi-urban regions across India.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. **H_1:** There is a significant relationship between digital finance usage and the financial inclusion of WORKING AND NON-WORKING WOMEN in Bardoli Taluka.
2. **H_2:** Digital finance usage positively influences the financial literacy of WORKING AND NON-WORKING WOMEN.

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INTERPRETATION

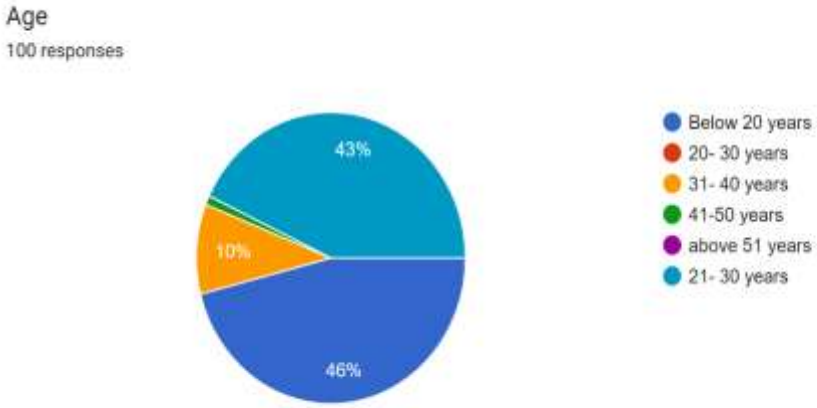


Figure 1

The age distribution shows that most respondents are young, with the majority below 30 years. This indicates that the survey reflects the perspectives of a youth-dominated population who are typically more active users of digital platforms.

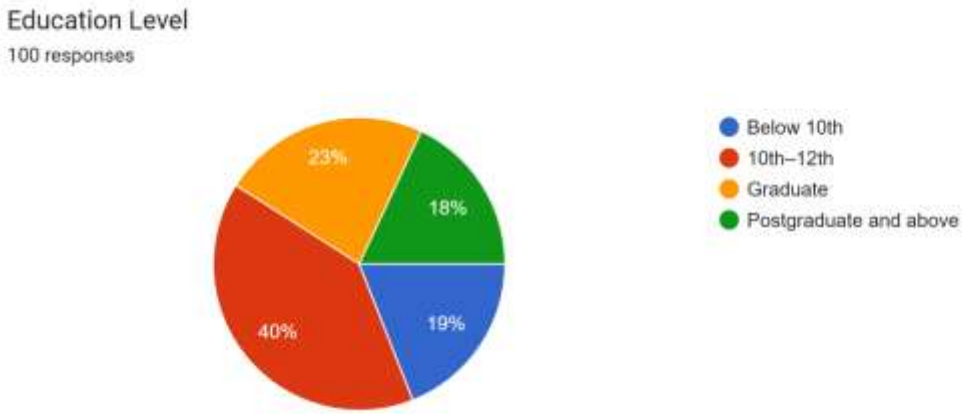


Figure 2

The chart shows that respondents come from a range of educational backgrounds, with the largest group (40%) having completed education up to the 10th–12th standard. This indicates that a significant portion of women in the sample possess basic schooling, which may support their ability to use digital finance tools. Around 23% are graduates, suggesting a good share of highly educated women who may be more comfortable with technology-based financial services. Meanwhile, 19% fall below the 10th standard and 18% hold postgraduate or higher qualifications, reflecting a mixed educational profile. Overall, the distribution shows that the study includes respondents with varied education levels, enabling a balanced understanding of how education influences digital finance usage and financial literacy.

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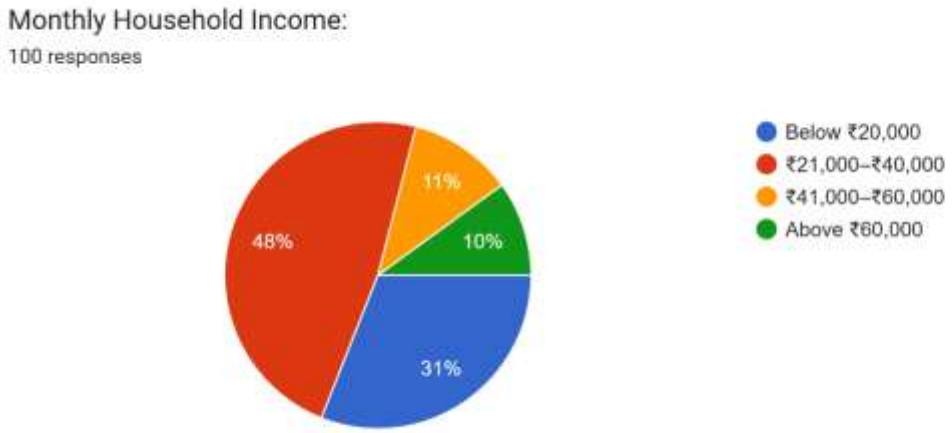


Figure 3

The chart indicates that nearly half of the respondents (48%) fall within the monthly household income bracket of ₹21,000–₹40,000, making it the dominant income group in the sample. This suggests that a majority of women belong to lower–middle-income households, which may influence their adoption of cost-effective and convenient digital finance tools. Another 31% report incomes below ₹20,000, highlighting the presence of economically weaker households that may rely on digital modes for affordable transactions. A smaller share of respondents earn between ₹41,000–₹60,000 (11%) or above ₹60,000 (10%), indicating that higher-income categories are relatively less represented. Overall, the distribution reflects a sample largely concentrated in the lower to moderate income ranges, which is important when assessing financial inclusion and digital finance dependency.

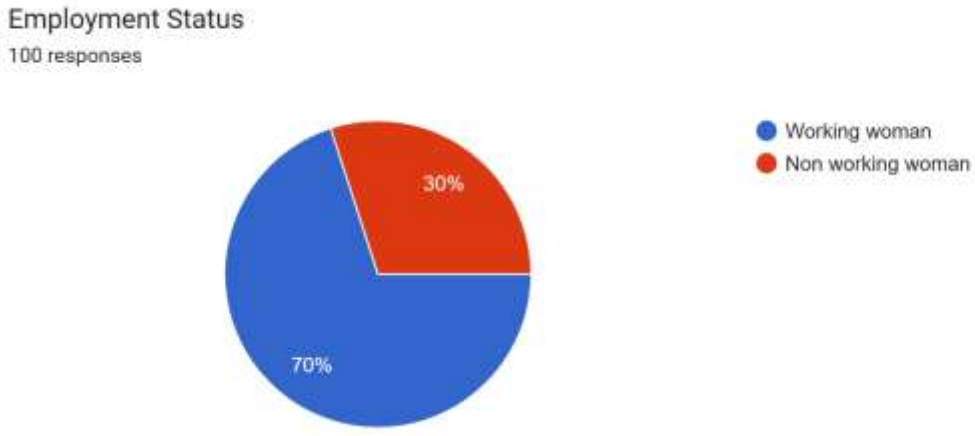


Figure 4

The chart shows that a majority of the respondents, accounting for 70%, are working women, while the remaining 30% are non-working women. This indicates that the sample is predominantly composed of women who are actively employed and likely have more exposure to financial transactions, both digital and traditional. Their working status may positively influence their familiarity with digital finance tools and their level of financial independence. The presence of 30% non-working women also ensures that the study captures the perspectives of homemakers, who may rely more on household members for financial decisions. Overall, the distribution presents a balanced representation that helps compare digital finance usage across working and non-working women.

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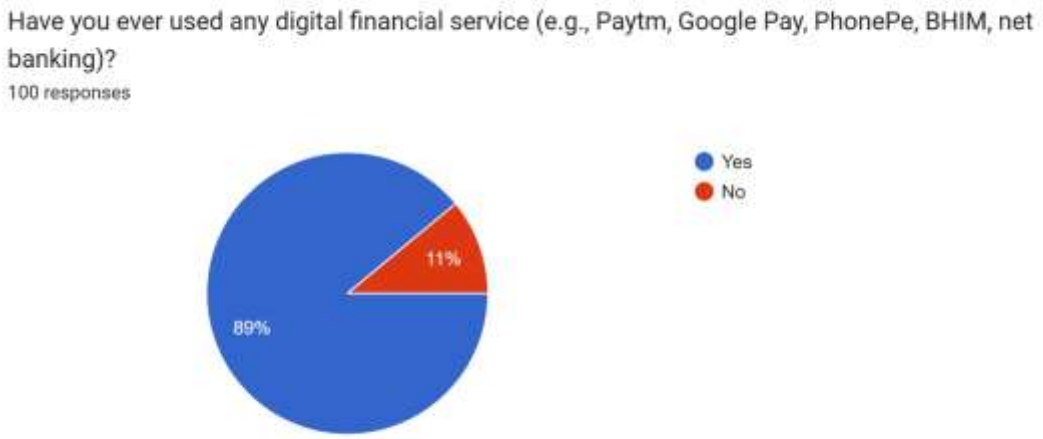


Figure 5

The chart reveals that an overwhelming majority of respondents (89%) have used some form of digital financial service such as Paytm, Google Pay, PhonePe, BHIM, or net banking, while only 11% reported not using any digital platform. This high usage rate indicates strong penetration of digital finance tools among women in the study area, suggesting widespread acceptance and familiarity with online payment methods. The significant share of users also reflects increasing trust and convenience associated with digital transactions. Meanwhile, the small percentage of non-users may represent individuals with limited digital awareness, access, or comfort with technology. Overall, the findings highlight that digital finance adoption is highly prevalent among both working and non-working women.

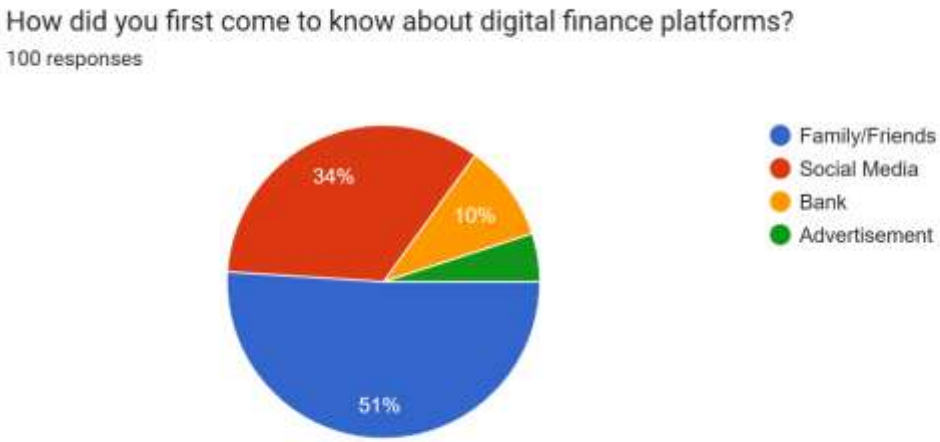


Figure 6

The chart shows that family and friends are the primary source through which respondents first learned about digital finance platforms, accounting for 51% of the responses. This highlights the strong influence of personal networks in spreading digital financial awareness. Social media is the second most significant source at 34%, indicating that online platforms also play a major role in introducing women to digital payment tools. Only 10% of respondents became aware through banks, and an even smaller proportion (5%) through advertisements. Overall, the findings suggest that informal channels—especially interpersonal communication—are more effective in encouraging awareness and adoption of digital finance among women than formal promotional efforts.

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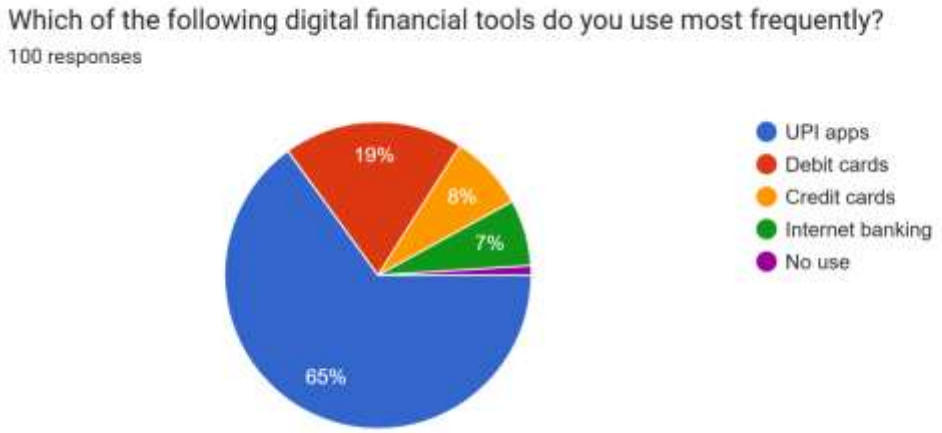


Figure 7

The chart shows that UPI apps are the most frequently used digital financial tool, chosen by a significant majority of respondents (65%). Debit cards follow at 19%, indicating they are still a common choice but far less preferred than UPI. Credit card usage stands at 8%, while only 7% of respondents rely on internet banking. A very small proportion reported not using any digital financial tools. Overall, the data highlights a clear shift toward UPI-based transactions as the dominant mode of digital payment.

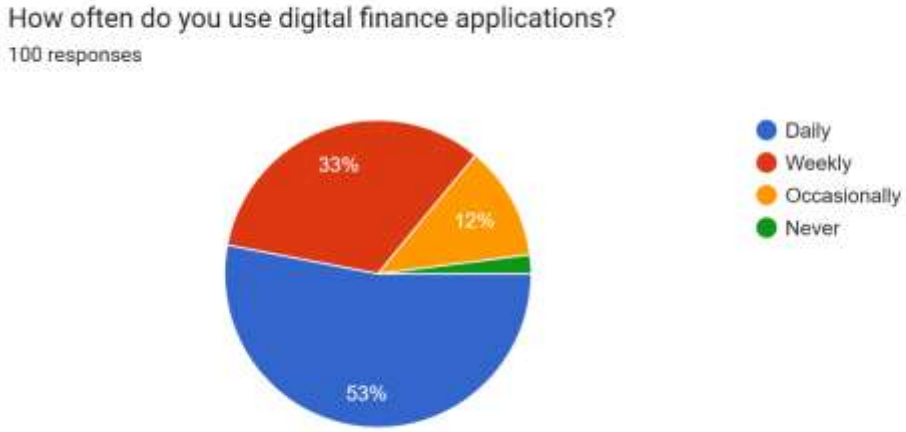


Figure 8

The chart indicates that digital finance applications are widely used, with over half of the respondents (53%) using them daily, showing strong integration of digital tools in routine financial activities. Another 33% use these applications weekly, suggesting regular engagement even if not daily. Occasionally used apps account for 12% of responses, while only a very small share—around 2%—reported never using digital finance apps. Overall, the data reflects a high level of dependence on digital financial platforms in everyday life.

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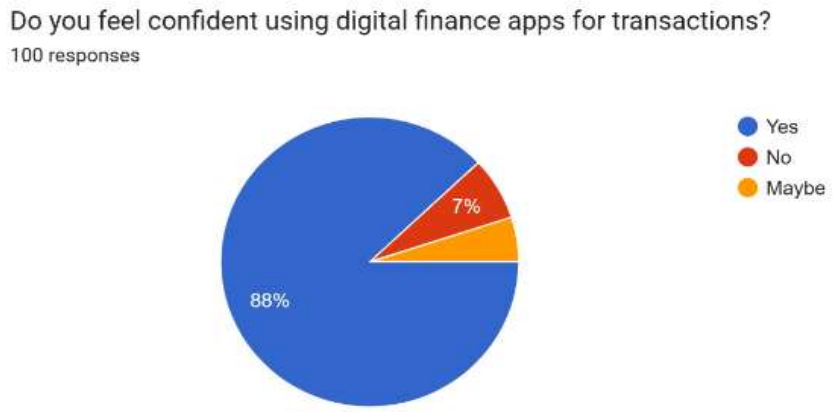


Figure 9

The chart shows that a vast majority of respondents (88%) feel confident using digital finance apps for transactions, indicating strong trust and comfort with digital financial technologies. Only 7% reported lacking confidence, while 5% were unsure. Overall, the data suggests that digital financial applications enjoy high user confidence, reflecting increased familiarity and perceived reliability of these tools.

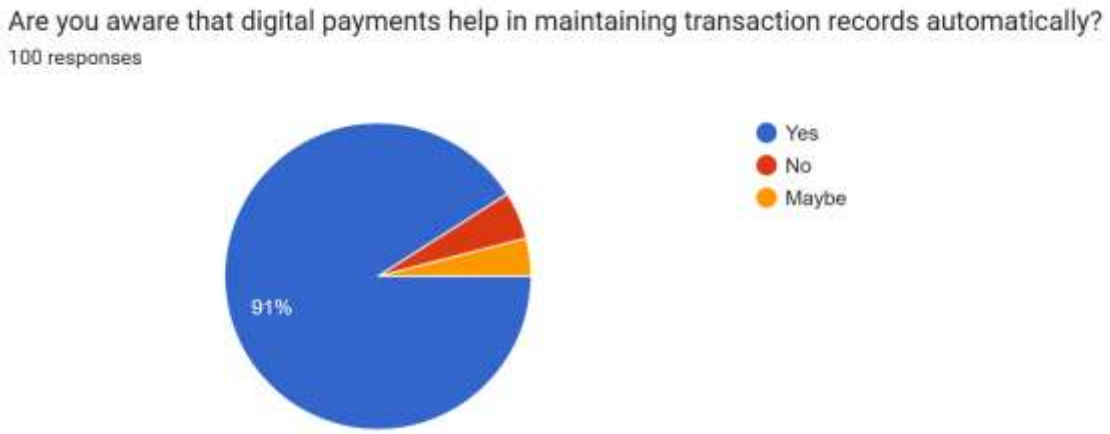


Figure 10

The chart indicates that awareness about digital payments automatically maintaining transaction records is very high, with 91% of respondents answering "Yes." A small proportion, 6%, are not aware of this feature, while 3% remain uncertain. Overall, the data suggests that most users clearly understand the record-keeping benefits of digital payment systems, reflecting strong awareness and familiarity with their functionalities.

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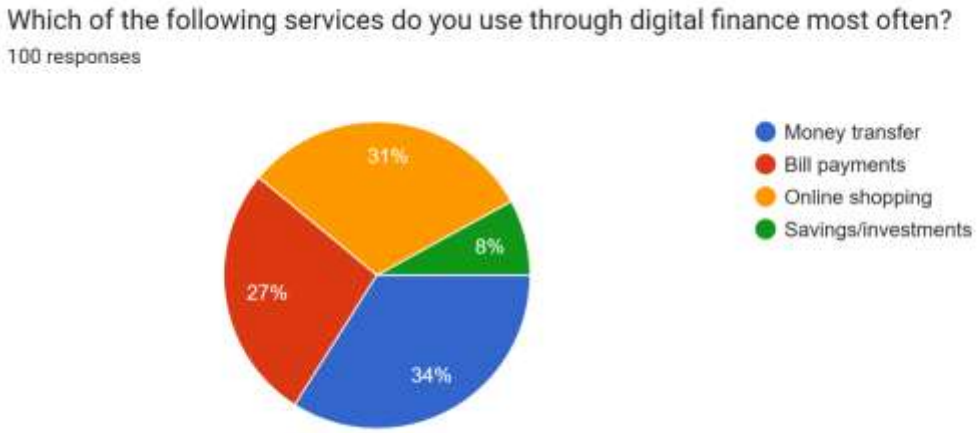


Figure 11

The chart shows that money transfers are the most commonly used digital finance service, chosen by 34% of respondents. Online shopping closely follows at 31%, indicating its strong popularity in digital transactions. Bill payments account for 27% of usage, showing that many users rely on digital platforms for routine expenses. Savings and investment activities make up only 8%, suggesting they are less frequently performed through digital finance apps. Overall, the data reflects that daily and convenience-based financial activities dominate digital finance usage.

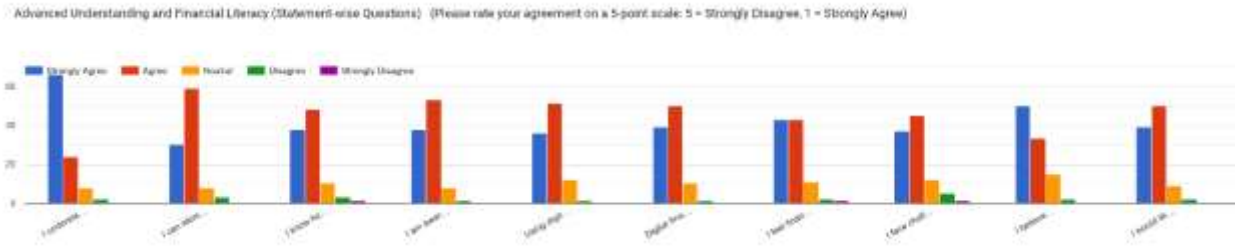


Figure 12

The chart illustrates respondents' agreement levels on various statements related to advanced understanding and financial literacy. Across most statements, a strong majority either *strongly agree* or *agree*, indicating high confidence and awareness regarding digital finance concepts. Neutral responses appear moderate, while *disagree* and *strongly disagree* remain very low, showing minimal uncertainty or negative perceptions. Overall, the data reflects that participants generally possess a solid understanding of digital financial systems, feel capable of using them effectively, and recognize both their benefits and the challenges involved.

5. FINDINGS

High Adoption of Digital Finance

A majority of women (89%) use digital financial services such as UPI, mobile wallets, and net banking, showing strong penetration of digital finance in Bardoli Taluka.

UPI as the Most Preferred Tool

Among various platforms, UPI applications are used most frequently (65%), indicating a shift toward fast, convenient, and cashless transactions.

Daily Usage is Common

Over half of the respondents (53%) use digital finance tools on a daily basis, showing deep integration of digital payments into routine financial activities.

Strong Confidence in Digital Transactions

Most women (88%) feel confident using digital finance apps, reflecting growing familiarity and trust in digital financial tools.

High Awareness of Record-Keeping

A considerable majority (91%) understand that digital payments automatically maintain transaction records, indicating good awareness of digital system features.

Digital Finance Used Mainly for Routine Needs

Money transfer, online shopping, and bill payments are the most common purposes, while savings and investment through digital channels are used far less (8%).

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Family and Social Networks Influence Awareness
More than half of the women (51%) learned about digital finance through family and friends, highlighting the importance of informal networks in technology adoption.

Education Levels Support Usage
Most respondents have at least secondary education, which contributes to their ability to access and use digital finance tools effectively.

Income Influences Digital Use
A large portion of respondents belong to lower–middle-income groups, indicating that digital finance is widely adopted even among those with moderate financial resources.

Positive Impact on Financial Inclusion and Literacy
The study shows that regular digital finance usage has improved women's financial awareness, record-keeping habits, and independence in making financial decisions.

6. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that digital finance has significantly enhanced the financial inclusion and literacy of working and non-working women in Bardoli Taluka, as a majority of respondents actively use UPI, mobile wallets, and other digital platforms for routine transactions. Increased usage has improved their confidence, decision-making abilities, and access to formal financial services, indicating a positive link between digital finance adoption and women's financial empowerment. However, despite high participation, gaps remain in advanced financial knowledge, cybersecurity awareness, and usage of digital savings or investment tools. Overall, the findings suggest that digital finance serves as a strong enabler of financial independence for women, but sustained training, awareness programs, and improved digital infrastructure are necessary to ensure equitable and safe participation for all segments of women in the region.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengthen Digital Finance Awareness Programs
Since most women learned about digital finance from family and friends, structured awareness initiatives by banks, NGOs, and local government bodies should be introduced to provide accurate information and reduce misinformation.

Conduct Regular Digital Literacy Training
Community-based workshops in Bardoli Taluka should be organized to teach women—especially non-working and less-educated women—how to use UPI, mobile banking, digital savings tools, and online safety practices.

Improve Cybersecurity Awareness
Although confidence levels are high, concerns about fraud remain. Training programs must include practical demonstrations on setting strong passwords, identifying fraud attempts, and safely using financial apps.

Enhance Access to Digital Infrastructure
Efforts must be made to ensure stable internet connectivity and affordable smartphones for women from low-income households to facilitate smooth digital finance adoption.

Promote Digital Savings and Investment Tools
Since savings/investment usage through digital platforms is very low (8%), banks should promote simple, vernacular-language-based digital savings schemes and micro-investment products suited to women.

Increase Bank-Level Support and Guidance
Banks should establish help-desks or "Digital Mitra Counters" to assist women in using digital platforms, completing transactions, and updating banking apps.

Design Women-Centric Fintech Initiatives
Fintech companies should introduce user-friendly, regional-language apps designed specifically for homemakers, with features like voice assistance, tutorials, and simplified navigation.

Encourage Policy Support for Inclusion
Local authorities should integrate digital financial literacy into self-help groups (SHGs), Mahila Mandals, and Anganwadi programs to increase outreach.

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ISSN (Online): 2455-3662
EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal
Volume: 11| Issue: 12| December 2025|| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2013 || SJIF Impact Factor 2025: 8.691 || ISI Value: 1.188

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