INTERNET ADDICTION LEVEL AMONG THE STUDENTS OF HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS WITHIN IMPHAL WEST DISTRICT: A CRITICAL STUDY

MayanglambamChinglembi Chanu
M.Ed. 2nd Year Student
D. M. College of Teacher Education
Imphal, (Manipur)
MU Roll No: 24024
MU Registration No: 19910153 of 2019
Affiliation: Manipur University
Email: chinglembichanu69@gmail.com
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Dr. TAOREM SURENDRA SINGH
Asst. Prof. (SS) & Supervisor
D. M. College of Teacher Education
Imphal, (Manipur)
Email: surendrataoremcha@gmail.com

Abstract

In the contemporary global society, the internet has become a requisite element, reshaping human interaction and education. While offering benefits like e-learning and academic research, its unrestricted access can lead to "Internet Addiction" (IA), particularly among adolescents. This study investigates the prevalence of IA among higher secondary students in the Imphal West District of Manipur, a region experiencing rapid digitalization alongside digital instability. The research aims to identify overall addiction levels and compare them across gender, academic streams, and school types. Findings indicate that while a majority of students fall into the mild category, a significant portion experiences moderate addiction, highlighting a growing public health and socio-educational challenge in the region.

Keywords: Internet Addiction, Higher Secondary Students, Adolescents, Imphal West District, Internet Addiction Test

Introduction: The internet has become an integral part of modern life, particularly for adolescents who extensively use it for academic, social, and recreational purposes. While appropriate use of the internet enhances learning opportunities and access to information, excessive and uncontrolled use may lead to internet addiction, adversely affecting students' academic performance, mental health, and social relationships. Internet addiction is increasingly recognized as a behavioral addiction characterized by excessive preoccupation with online activities, loss of control over usage, and neglect of daily responsibilities.

In the Indian context, the rapid growth of digital technology, affordable smartphones, and widespread internet connectivity has increased adolescents' exposure to online platforms. Higher secondary students, being at a critical developmental stage, are particularly vulnerable to problematic internet use. Despite this, limited empirical studies have focused on internet addiction among higher secondary school students in Manipur, especially within Imphal West District. The present study attempts to fill this research gap by critically examining the level of internet addiction among this group.

Justification Of The Study: Despite extensive global and national research, a noticeable gap exists regarding internet addiction within the specific socio-geographical context of Imphal West, Manipur. This study addresses this gap by providing context-specific data to inform targeted interventions and digital literacy programs for local stakeholders, including parents and policymakers.

Statement of the Problem: The problem of the study is stated as:**"Internet Addiction Level among the Students of Higher Secondary Schools within Imphal West District: A Critical Study".**

Definition of Operational Key Terms

1. **Internet Addiction**: Refers to the compulsive and excessive use of the internet that negatively impacts an individual's life. This can manifest as an inability to control online usage, leading to neglect of responsibilities, strained relationships, and decreased productivity.
2. **Level**: Level refers to the degree or severity of problematic internet use.
3. **Students of Higher Secondary Schools**: Refers to individuals enrolled in classes from grade XI and grade XII in higher secondary schools, typically aged between 16 to 18 years.
4. **Imphal West District**: Imphal West is one of the sixteen districts of Manipur, India, and is the most populous district in the state. It is located in the central region of Manipur, within the valley area. The district is considered the most urbanized and densely populated part of Manipur.
5. **Critical Study**: A systematic analysis aimed at examining the current level of awareness among secondary school students about media abuse, identifying gaps, and providing recommendations for enhancing their understanding and safe use of media.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out overall internet addiction level among the higher secondary students within Imphal West District.
2. To compare internet addiction level between boys and girls students of higher secondary schools within Imphal West District.
3. To compare internet addiction level between science and arts stream students of higher secondary schools within Imphal West District.
4. To compare internet addiction level between government and private school students of higher secondary schools within Imphal West District.
5. To find out suggestion and remedial measure in order to control internet addiction among the higher secondary students within Imphal West district.

Hypotheses of the Study

H01: There is no significant level of overall internet addiction level among the higher secondary students within Imphal West District.

H02: There is no significant difference of internet addiction level between boys and girls students of the higher secondary schools within Imphal West District.

H03: There is no significant difference of internet addiction level between science and arts stream students of the higher secondary schools within Imphal West District.

H04: There is no significant difference of internet addiction level between government and private school students of the higher secondary schools within Imphal West District.

Delimitation of the Study

1. The study is confined to the **Imphal West District** of Manipur only.
2. The study is delimited to **6 (six) Higher Secondary Schools** (3 Government and 3 Private schools).
3. The study is restricted to the schools affiliated under the **Council of Higher Secondary Education, Manipur (COHSEM)**.
4. The study is delimited to a sample of **120 students** only.
5. The study is restricted to the **academic session 2024-2025**.
6. The study is confined only to the assessment of **Internet Addiction levels** among the students.

Review of Related Literature

(1) Chen and Nath (2016) compared 1,150 students across the U.S., Africa, and China, finding that internet addiction is a global issue but manifests differently across cultures. The study revealed that psychometric constructs of addiction vary by economic and technological context, highlighting the urgent need for culturally specific assessment frameworks rather than universal standards. **(2) Balhara et al. (2018)** identified a 19% prevalence of problematic internet use among 6,291 Delhi students. Higher risks were associated with being male, older age, and personal device ownership, particularly when used for gaming and social media. Conversely, educational use was found to be a protective factor. (3) **Lodha (2018)** examined the psychological impact of internet dependency on Indian youth (ages 15–29), finding a significant correlation between addiction and increased levels of depression, anxiety, and stress. Notably, the study found that gender did not significantly influence these mental health outcomes. (4) **Chung, Lee, and Lee (2019)** found that 6% of junior high students in Seoul were severely addicted. Environmental factors, such as access to PC cafés and exposure to game advertising, were stronger predictors of addiction than family or school factors. (5) **Erol and Cirak (2019)** identified that loneliness, younger age, and lower CGPA significantly predicted internet addiction among Turkish college students. Increased use of smartphones and social media was directly linked to higher addiction levels. (6) **Bisen and Deshpande (2020)** surveyed 1,600 Indian college students and found a 12.5% prevalence of internet addiction. Their findings revealed that addicted students exhibited significantly higher levels of depression, anxiety, and impulsivity compared to non-addicts, emphasizing the critical link between excessive usage and mental health issues. (7) **Chung et al. (2020)** discovered that "evening type" adolescents (those with a late-night circadian preference) had higher rates of internet addiction, shorter sleep duration, and higher depression levels compared to "morning types." (8) **Hayat, Kojuri, and Amini (2020)** found a significant positive correlation (r = 0.39) between internet addiction and academic procrastination among medical students.Male students and those living in dormitories were identified as high-risk groups for academic neglect. (9) **Prakash et al. (2020)** focused on the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown in Varanasi, finding that over 70% of respondents experienced some level of addiction (50.29% mild, 18.29% moderate, and 1.71% severe). The study concluded that internet addiction significantly increased during the crisis, with the highest impact seen in the 18–25 age group. (10) **Jojo and Sundaramoorthy (2022)** investigated the influence of personality traits on 421 college students in Kerala.Their results indicated that students high in neuroticism were more prone to internet addiction, whereas those with high levels of agreeableness and conscientiousness were less likely to be addicted. The study also noted higher addiction levels among males and students from nuclear families. (11) **Avcı and Kula (2023)** found that positive attitudes toward online courses increased student engagement and reduced Fear of Missing Out (FoMO). Conversely, higher academic achievement was significantly linked to lower levels of internet addiction. (12) **Nadhudu (2025)** surveyed 500 university students and found that 46% exhibited signs of addiction. Key risk factors included urban residency, personal device ownership, and heavy academic loads. The findings highlighted strong links between addiction and poor sleep, anxiety, and social media use, necessitating targeted academic and psychological support. (13) **Meitei et al. (2021)** investigated the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on the Northeast Indian population, finding that over 44% of respondents suffered from some form of insomnia. The study revealed a significant correlation between excessive internet use and worsened sleep quality, particularly among females. (14) **Gonmei (2016)** assessed behavioral patterns in Imphal and found that 42.2% of high school students engaged in gambling, with a 1.8% rate of pathological gambling. The research noted that habits were heavily influenced by peer pressure, media, and cultural factors like "Housie" and sports betting.

CONCLUSION: It was concluded that the topic of the research was the new venture of study as no one has conducted such topic before in this specific context. The research tried to find out issues and challenges of "Internet Addiction Level among the Students of Higher Secondary Schools within Imphal West District: A Critical Study." This investigation is expected to provide a foundation for future research and guide stakeholders in addressing the digital challenges faced by adolescents in the region.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

Method of the Study: The research methodology for the present study was the **descriptive survey method**, which was employed to find out the different levels of internet addiction among higher secondary students within the Imphal West District of Manipur.

Population of the Study: The population of the present study is constituted by all the students studying in Higher Secondary Schools (Class XI and XII) in the Imphal West District of Manipur during the academic session **2024-2025**.

Sample of the Study: The investigator selected a sample of **120 students** selected from **six higher secondary schools**. The sample included **60 male and 60 female students** from **03-Government and 03-Private schools** affiliated with the Council of Higher Secondary Education, Manipur (COHSEM). From each school, 20 students were selected using a stratified random sampling technique.

Tools of the Study: Tools are those instruments employed for gathering new facts to explore the field. The present study is an explorative study, and the Descriptive Survey Method was used for investigation. In this regard, the **Internet Addiction Test (IAT)**, a standardized tool developed by **Dr. Kimberly Young**, was used to explore the levels of internet addiction among the students. The tool consists of a 20-item questionnaire covering various symptoms and behaviors associated with compulsive internet use, assessed on a 5-point Likert scale.

PROCEDURE OF DATA COLLECTION: To initiate the process of data collection, the investigator, after obtaining an authorization letter from the Principal of the investigator's college, obtained permission from the principals of the selected higher secondary schools. The investigator then visited each selected classroom, established a good rapport with the students, and explained the purpose of the study. The students were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. The IAT questionnaire was then distributed with clear instructions. While there was no fixed time limit, students were requested to submit their responses promptly after completion.

PROCEDURE OF DATA ANALYSIS: The data were carefully and systematically collected, organized, and processed to draw valid conclusions. Data analysis is a crucial step that demands accuracy to minimize errors and ensure the reliability of results.

For this study, the responses were scored according to the standardized IAT procedure. The 20 items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale: **1 = Rarely, 2 = Occasionally, 3 = Frequently, 4 = Often, and 5 = Always.** Each participant's total score was calculated by summing the responses. Based on the total score, addiction levels were categorized as follows:

- **20–49:** Mild level of Internet addiction
- **50–79:** Moderate level of Internet addiction
- **80–100:** Severe level of Internet addiction

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED: After the collection of data, analysis was performed to examine the objectives and hypotheses formulated for the study. The data were analyzed and interpreted employing the following statistical techniques:

1. **Mean**
2. **Standard Deviation**
3. **Graphical Representation**
4. **T-Test**
5. **Percentage Analysis**

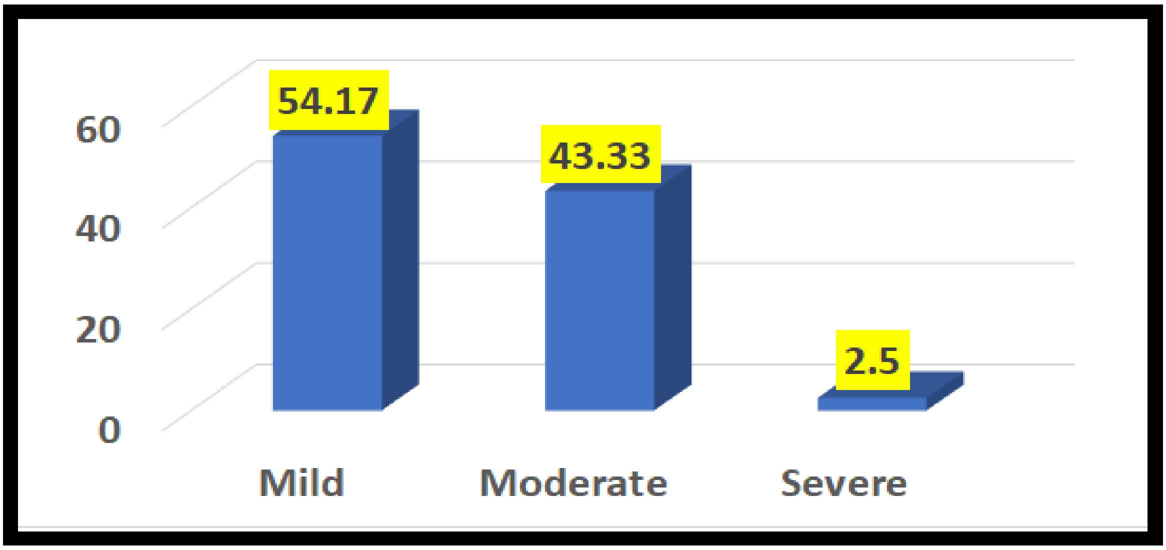
ANALYSIS AND INTRERPRETATION OF DATA

Hypothesis no. 1: There is no significant level of overall internet addiction level among the higher secondary students within Imphal West District.

Table no: 1: Level of overall internet addiction level among the higher secondary students within Imphal West District.

No.	Scores ranges	Internet Addiction Level	Frequency	Percentage
1	20-49	Mild	65	54.17
2	50-79	Moderate	52	43.33
3	80-100	Severe	3	2.50
			N=120	100%

Figure No: 1: Showing the overall level of overall internet addiction level among the higher secondary students within Imphal West District.



Interpretation:

1. It can be analysed based on above table no. 1 that 65 students (54.17%) are found within the range of 20-49 which is interpreted as mild level of internet addiction which means they are average online user. They may surf the web a bit too long at times, but have control over usage.
2. It can be analysed based on above table no. 4.1 that 52 students (43.33%) are found within the range of 50-79 which is interpreted as moderate level of internet addiction which means they experience occasional or frequent problems because of the internet and need to consider full impact on life.
3. It can be analysed based on above table no. 4.1 that 3 students (2.50%) are found within the range of 80-100 which is interpreted as severe level of internet addiction which means that internet usage is causing significant problems in their life.

Taken together, the data demonstrate that while the majority of students are mild users, a large proportion (nearly 46%) are at moderate to severe levels of internet addiction. Therefore**, the 1st hypothesis of the study— "There is no significant level of overall internet addiction among the higher secondary students within Imphal West District" is rejected** as the results establish that internet addiction exists at varying levels among the students, with a significant proportion displaying moderate to severe addiction.

Hypothesis No. 2: There is no significant difference of internet addiction level between boys and girls students of the higher secondary schools within Imphal West District.

Table No: 2: **Internet addiction level between boys and girls students of the higher secondary schools within Imphal West District.**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	SED	df	t-value	p-value
Boys	**60**	**48.38**	**13.13**	**3.45**	**118**	**-0.55**	**0.58**
Girls	**60**	**49.83**	**15.54**				

Remark- Insignificant as the t-value is -0.55198 and the p-value is 0.582008. The t-value which is -0.55 is less than p-value which is 0.58 at 0.05 level. The result is not significant as p>0.05

INTERPRETATION: It can be observed from the above table NO: 4.2 that the levels of internet addiction among Boys and Girls are found to have mean scores of 48.38 and 49.83 with the standard deviation of 13.13 and 15.54 respectively.

It is evident that the obtained t-value of -0.55 for 118 df is not significant as p>0.05. Therefore the 2nd hypothesis of the study—"There is no significant difference of internet addiction level between boys and girls students of the higher secondary schools within Imphal West District." is accepted as there is no significant difference on internet addiction level among boys and girls students of the higher secondary schools within Imphal West District.

Hypothesis No. 3: There is no significant difference of internet addiction level between science and arts stream students of the higher secondary schools within Imphal West District.

Table no: 3: Internet addiction level between science and arts stream students of the higher secondary schools within Imphal West District.

Streams	N	Mean	SD	SED	df	t- value	p-value
Science	60	52.4	15.69	3.28	118	2.57	0.01
Arts	60	45.82	12.11				

Remark- Significant as the t-value is 2.57208 and the p-value is 0.01135. The t-value which is 2.57 is greater than p-value which is 0.01 at 0.05 level. The result is significant as $p<0.05$

INTERPRETATION: It can be observed from the above table NO: 4.3 that the levels of internet addiction among science and arts are found to have mean scores of 52.4 and 45.82 with the standard deviation of 15.69 and 12.11 respectively.

It is evident that the obtained t-value of 2.57 for 118 df is significant as $p<0.05$. Therefore the 3rd hypothesis of the study "There is no significant difference of internet addiction level between science and arts stream students of the higher secondary schools within Imphal West District." is rejected as there is significant difference on internet addiction level among science and arts students of the higher secondary schools within Imphal West District.

Hypothesis No. 4: There is no significant difference of internet addiction level between government and private school students of the higher secondary schools within Imphal West District

Table no: 4: Internet addiction level between government and private school students of the higher secondary schools within Imphal West District

School type	N	Mean	SD	SED	df	t- value	p-value
Private	60	48.52	13.11	3.45	118	-0.45	0.65
Government	60	49.7	15.57				

Remark- Insignificant as the t-value is -0.45027 and the p-value is 0.653342. The t-value which is -0.45 is less than p-value which is 0.65 at 0.05 level. The result is not significant at $p>0.05$.

INTERPRETATION: It can be observed from the above table no: 4.4 that the levels of internet addiction among private and government are found to have mean scores of 48.52 and 49.7 with the standard deviation of 13.11 and 15.57 respectively.

It is evident that the obtained t-value of -0.45 for 118 df is not significant as $p>0.05$. Therefore the 4th hypothesis of the study "There is no significant difference of internet addiction level between government and private school students of the higher secondary schools within Imphal West District" is retained as there is no significant difference on internet addiction level among science and arts students of higher secondary schools within Imphal West District.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. The first hypothesis constructed for testing that *"There is no significant level of overall internet addiction among the higher secondary students within Imphal West District"* is rejected as the findings reveal varying levels of internet addiction among students. Out of 120 students, 54.17% fall under mild addiction, 43.33% under moderate addiction, and 2.50% under severe addiction. Taken together, nearly 46% of the students are at moderate to severe levels of internet addiction, indicating the presence of a significant problem.
2. The second hypothesis of the study *"There is no significant difference of internet addiction level between boys and girls students of the higher secondary schools within Imphal West District"* is accepted as there is no significant difference between the internet addiction levels of boys and girls. The mean scores of boys (48.38) and girls (49.83) with standard deviations of 13.13 and 15.54 respectively confirm that gender does not play a significant role in internet addiction levels among the students.
3. The third hypothesis of the study *"There is no significant difference of internet addiction level between science and arts stream students of the higher secondary schools within Imphal West District"* is rejected as there is a significant difference between the two streams. Science stream students reported a higher mean score of 52.4 compared to 45.82 for arts stream students, with the result being significant at $p < 0.05$. This establishes that science students are more prone to internet addiction than arts students.
4. The fourth hypothesis of the study *"There is no significant difference of internet addiction level between government and private school students of the higher secondary schools within Imphal West District"* is accepted as there is no significant difference between the two groups. The mean scores of private school students (48.52) and government school students (49.7) with standard deviations of 13.11 and 15.57 respectively indicate that school type does not influence internet addiction levels.

REMEDIAL MEASURES SUBJECT TO MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. The first hypothesis of the study *"There is no significant level of overall internet addiction among the higher secondary students within Imphal West District"* is rejected as the findings reveal that 54.17% of students fall under mild addiction, 43.33% under moderate addiction, and 2.50% under severe addiction. Since nearly half of the students are at moderate to severe levels, it is very important to initiate remedial steps. Schools, parents, and policymakers should work together to develop proper guidance programmes, time-management workshops, and digital literacy sessions to help students balance their academic and recreational use of the internet. Counselling and awareness drives should be organized to educate students about the psychological, social, and academic risks of excessive internet use.
2. The second hypothesis of the study *"There is no significant difference of internet addiction level between boys and girls students of the higher secondary schools within Imphal West District"* is accepted as no significant difference was found between the mean scores of boys (48.38) and girls (49.83). This implies that both genders are equally vulnerable to internet addiction. Therefore, remedial measures should not be designed separately for boys and girls but should target the entire student community. Schools can organize awareness activities, debates, and campaigns to promote healthy online practices among all students irrespective of gender.
3. The third hypothesis of the study *"There is no significant difference of internet addiction level between science and arts stream students of the higher secondary schools within Imphal West District"* is rejected as science students (mean score 52.4) show significantly higher levels of internet addiction compared to arts students (mean score 45.82). This may be due to greater exposure of science students to technology-based learning or online resources. Special attention should be given to science stream students by integrating structured guidelines for controlled internet use, promoting offline learning strategies, and encouraging recreational activities beyond the digital space. Teachers of science streams should actively monitor students' online behavior and provide timely counseling wherever necessary.
4. The fourth hypothesis of the study *"There is no significant difference of internet addiction level between government and private school students of the higher secondary schools within Imphal West District"* is accepted as the difference between the mean scores of private (48.52) and government (49.7) school students is insignificant. This finding suggests that internet addiction is a common issue cutting across school types. Hence, remedial measures should be uniformly applied across both government and private schools. Joint workshops, collaborative awareness programmes, and involvement of parents should be emphasized in order to develop a balanced approach toward internet usage in all school settings.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS TO ADDRESS INTERNET ADDICTION

1. **Incorporate Digital Literacy in Curriculum**- Teach students how to use the internet responsibly, focusing on academic purposes and time management.

2. **Introduce Time Management Workshops**- Schools can conduct sessions to help students plan study schedules, limit screen time, and balance online and offline activities.
3. **Parental Monitoring and Guidance**- Parents should set clear boundaries for internet use at home and encourage regular breaks from devices.
4. **Promote Extracurricular Activities**- Engage students in sports, arts, music, debate, and outdoor activities to reduce dependency on digital devices.
5. **Organize Awareness Campaigns**- Schools should hold seminars, poster campaigns, and rallies to spread awareness about the harmful effects of internet addiction.
6. **Peer Support Programs**- Encourage peer counseling and group discussions where students can share experiences and tips for healthy internet use.
7. **Encourage Digital Detox Practices**- Motivate students to spend a few hours or even a day offline every week to refresh their minds.
8. **Promote Family Time and Interaction**- Encourage families to spend quality offline time together, such as eating meals without devices or going for outdoor activities.
9. **Educate on Physical and Mental Health Risks**- Make students aware that excessive internet use can cause health problems like poor eyesight, sleep disturbances, stress, and anxiety.
10. **Promote Productive Internet Use**- Encourage students to use the internet mainly for research, learning, and skill development rather than just entertainment.

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