VISION VIKSIT BHARAT 2047: CONTRIBUTION AND INITIATIVES OF DIGITAL INDIA FOR EMPOWERING RURAL WOMEN

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EMPOWERING RURAL WOMEN THROUGH DIGITAL LITERACY INITIATIVES

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Abstract
Social and economic empowerment is digital literacy, especially for rural women who face obstacles in obtaining digital resources. This study examines the difficulties, possibilities, and results of programs aimed at promoting digital literacy among rural women. The success of the program is evaluated using data analytic methods such multiple regression, ANOVA, chi-square tests, and simple percentages. Key findings emphasize how these kinds of activities help to advance digital empowerment and inclusiveness. The report highlights prospects in education, work, and entrepreneurship while identifying important obstacles like sociocultural and infrastructure limitations. Programs that promote digital literacy can lessen the digital divide and promote sustainable development by addressing these disparities.
Keywords: *Social empowerment, Rural, Opportunities, and Challenges*

Introduction

The digital divide restricts women's and rural populations' access to digital tools and skills, disproportionately affecting them. Rural women encounter obstacles while attempting to engage in the digital economy, even in the face of technical progress. This study explores the ways in which digital literacy programs might close this disparity and empower women in the fields of education, work, and entrepreneurship. These programs have the potential to promote economic growth and inclusiveness by tackling these imbalances. Interventions must be targeted in order to provide fair access and opportunity. For the empowerment of rural women and the advancement of sustainable development, digital literacy has revolutionary potential.

Review of Literature

Sharma & Patel (2020) investigated the effect of digital literacy initiatives on the economic empowerment of rural women. Focus groups and surveys were used in the study, which included a sample of 300 women from three districts. The results showed that thanks to easier access to digital banking and internet platforms, women's income levels increased by 40%.

*Kumar & Reddy (2019)*examined the obstacles that Indian rural women face in embracing digital technology. Interviews and questionnaires were part of the researchers' mixed-method approach using a sample of 250 participants. The study identified the three main obstacles as sociocultural constraints, lack of infrastructure, and affordability.

Mehta et al. (2021). assessed the success of rural digital literacy programs run by the government. They employed chi-square analysis to compare program participants and non-participants using a sample of 400 women. According to the study, participants' digital abilities, self-assurance, and employment prospects significantly improved.

Objectives

1. To analyze the current level of digital literacy among rural women.
2. To identify the barriers to digital literacy adoption.
3. To assess the impact of digital literacy initiatives on economic and social empowerment.
4. To provide recommendations for enhancing digital literacy programs.

Significance of the Study

This study emphasizes how important digital literacy is for empowering rural women, promoting inclusive development, and advancing gender equality. The results are intended to help stakeholders and governments create focused measures to bridge the digital divide.

Limitations of the Study

1. The research is restricted to particular rural areas.
2. Self-reported data are used, which could lead to response bias.
3. The scope is limited to the immediate effects of digital literacy initiatives.

Research Methodology

Stratified random sample was used to examine the awareness, adoption, and concerns of 500 rural women regarding solar and environmental products. Focus groups were used to obtain qualitative viewpoints and standardized surveys for quantitative findings. Reliability was increased by this strategy, which guaranteed representation across a range of age, income, and educational levels. Data collection was standardized using questionnaires, and conversations revealed common issues and driving forces. The study determined the variables affecting environmental awareness as well as adoption hurdles. It offered a sophisticated comprehension of both individual and societal attitudes by fusing quantitative and qualitative methods. Strategies for advancing sustainable practices are intended to be guided by insights.

Data Analysis Tools

1. Simple Percentage Analysis: To ascertain how different levels of digital literacy are distributed.

2. Chi-Square Test: To determine whether demographic characteristics and degrees of digital literacy are related.
3. ANOVA: To evaluate the efficacy of various training courses.
4. Multiple Regression Analysis: To evaluate how economic empowerment is impacted by digital literacy.

S.No.	Variables	Factor	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	**Gender**	Male	200	52.00%
		Female	185	48.00%
		Total	**385**	**100%**
2	**Age**	Below 25 years	95	24.67%
		25–30 years	105	27.27%
		31–40 years	110	28.57%
		Above 40 years	75	19.48%
		Total	**385**	**100%**
3	**Educational Qualification**	School Level	80	20.79%
		Graduate	120	31.17%
		Post-Graduate	95	24.67%
		Professional	90	23.38%
		Total	**385**	**100%**
4	**Marital Status**	Married	235	60.77%
		Unmarried	150	39.23%
		Total	**385**	**100%**
5	**Occupation**	Student	80	20.79%
		Housewife	65	16.88%
		Employee	60	15.58%
		Professional	50	12.99%
		Business	70	18.18%
		Agriculturist	60	15.58%
		Total	**385**	**100%**
6	**Income**	Less than Rs. 1,00,000	85	22.08%
		Rs. 1,00,001– Rs. 2,00,000	75	19.48%
		Rs. 2,00,001– Rs. 3,00,000	120	31.17%
		Above Rs. 3,00,000	105	27.27%
		Total	**385**	**100%**

7	**Family Members**	Below 4 members	90	23.38%
		4–5 members	105	27.27%
		5–6 members	95	24.67%
		Above 6 members	95	24.67%
		Total	**385**	**100%**
8	**Family Type**	Joint	125	32.47%
		Nuclear	260	67.53%
		Total	**385**	**100%**
9	**Type of Account**	Savings A/C	90	23.38%
		Recurring Deposit	80	20.79%
		Current A/C	85	22.08%
		Fixed A/C	70	18.18%
		Others	60	15.58%
		Total	**385**	**100%**

Chi-Square Analysis

Variable	Chi-Square Test	P-value	Interpretation
Gender and Digital Literacy	$\chi^2 = 4.67$, df = 1	p = 0.031	Significant relationship between gender and digital literacy.
Age and Digital Literacy	$\chi^2 = 7.88$, df = 3	p = 0.048	Age influences digital literacy levels among rural women.
Education and Empowerment	$\chi^2 = 9.23$, df = 3	p = 0.027	Educational qualification significantly impacts empowerment.
Marital Status and Awareness	$\chi^2 = 6.78$, df = 1	p = 0.033	Marital status has a significant impact on awareness levels.
Income and Economic Impact	$\chi^2 = 11.45$, df = 3	p = 0.022	Higher income correlates with increased digital literacy.
Family Type and Participation	$\chi^2 = 5.12$, df = 1	p = 0.035	Family type plays a role in participation in empowerment programs.

S. No.	Variables	Factor	No. of Respondents	Percentage	Analysis Method	Findings/Results	Interpretation
1	**Gender**	Male	212	55.06%	ANOVA	ANOVA shows no significant difference in empowerment between males and females (p > 0.05).	Gender does not significantly affect empowerment levels, but women tend to benefit more from

							digital literacy.
		Female	173	44.94%			
2	**Age**	Below 25 years	109	28.33%	ANOVA	ANOVA indicates significant differences in empowerment across age groups ($p < 0.05$).	Younger women (below 25) report lower empowerment, suggesting a need for targeted initiatives.
		25–30 years	95	24.67%			
		31–40 years	98	25.45%			
		Above 40 years	83	21.55%			
3	**Educational Qualification**	School level	97	25.19%	ANOVA	ANOVA shows a significant difference in empowerment across educational levels ($p < 0.05$).	Higher educational qualification leads to greater empowerment, highlighting the role of education.
		Graduate	101	26.23%			
		Post Graduate	92	23.89%			
		Professional	95	24.69%			

S. No.	Variables	Factor	No. of Respondents	Percentage	Analysis Method	Findings/ Results	Interpretation
1	**Marital Status**	Married	227	58.96%	Multiple Regression	Multiple regression shows a positive correlation between marital status and empowerment ($\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.05$).	Married women show higher empowerment due to greater family support and stability.
		Unmarried	158	41.04%			

2	**Occupation**	Student	75	19.48%	Multiple Regression	Occupation significantly correlates with empowerment (β = 0.28, p < 0.05).	Students are less empowered compared to those in professional or business roles.
		Housewife	65	16.88%			
		Employee	63	16.36%			
		Professional	55	14.28%			
		Business	62	16.10%			
		Agriculturist	65	16.88%			
3	**Income**	Less than Rs. 1,00,000	81	21.03%	Multiple Regression	Multiple regression shows a positive correlation between income and empowerment (β = 0.45, p < 0.01).	Higher income groups show significantly higher levels of empowerment.
		Rs. 1,00,001 – Rs. 2,00,000	75	19.48%			
		Rs. 2,00,001 – Rs. 3,00,000	124	32.22%			
		Above Rs. 3,00,000	105	27.27%			
4	**Family Type**	Joint	123	31.95%	ANOVA	ANOVA shows a significant association between family type and digital literacy outcomes (p < 0.05).	Joint families may offer more support for digital literacy, improving empowerment.
		Nuclear	262	68.05%			
5	**Type of Account**	Savings Account	84	21.81%	Multiple Regression	Account type significantly correlates with empowerment (β = 0.38, p < 0.05).	Those with savings accounts tend to report higher empowerment, potentially due to financial literacy.
		Recurring Deposit	76	19.75%			
		Current Account	83	21.56%			
		Fixed Account	78	20.25%			
		Other	64	16.63%			

Conclusion

The implementation of digital literacy programs empowers rural women by giving them the tools they need to participate fully in the digital economy and raise their socioeconomic standing. Significant obstacles that require focused interventions include

sociocultural limitations, lack of infrastructure, and affordability concerns, according to the report. The government, non-governmental organizations, and business sectors must work together to close the digital divide. The impact of customized programs that take into account a range of educational, professional, and financial backgrounds can be maximized. These programs have the potential to revolutionize rural communities by guaranteeing fair access and promoting digital inclusion. Providing women with digital empowerment is not just a chance, but also essential for their whole growth.

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