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ONE DAY NATIONAL SEMINAR ON

NURTURING NARI SHAKTI: WOMEN AS LEADERS IN VIKSIT BHARAT@2047

Editors – in – Chief

Dr N Prem Anand

Dr D Divya

Organized by

Department of MBA

Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science (Autonomous),
Nava India, Coimbatore.

03rd February 2025

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EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH DIGITAL LITERACY AND ACCESS TO ICT IN INDIA

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I. INTRODUCTION

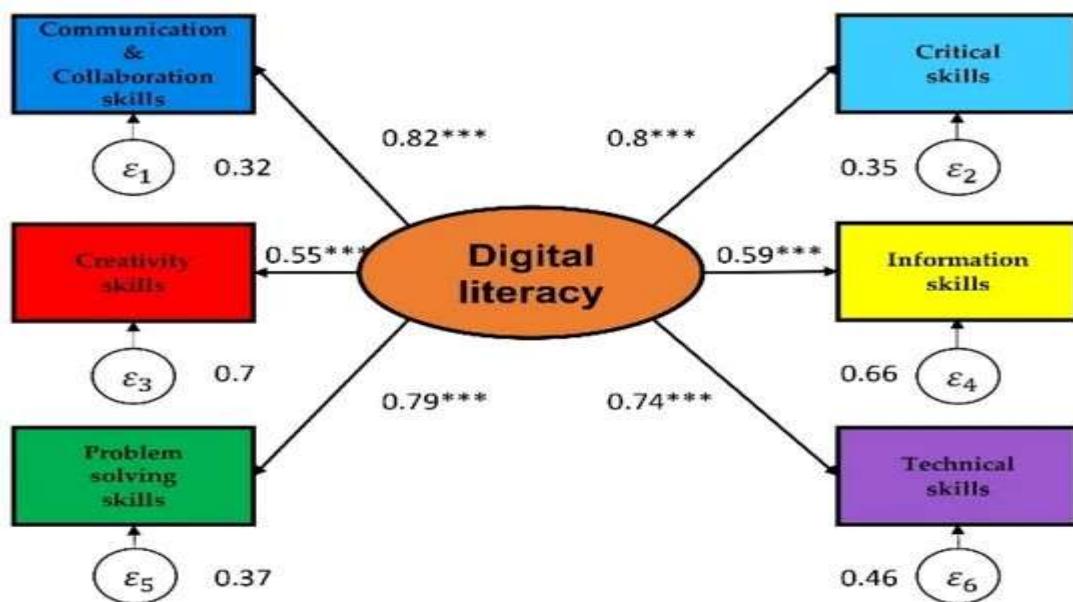
Digital literacy refers to a wide range of skills necessary for individuals to engage meaningfully and effectively in a digitally interconnected world. It goes beyond mere technical proficiency and involves the ability to access, evaluate, comprehend, and create information using digital devices and platforms. At its core, digital literacy enables individuals to navigate the vast digital landscape, discern credible information from misinformation, communicate efficiently through various digital mediums, and leverage technology to solve problems and innovate. It encompasses competencies in utilising digital tools, understanding digital citizenship, practicing online safety and privacy, critically analysing digital content, and adapting to emerging technologies. Digital literacy empowers individuals to participate fully in the digital age.

ICT refers to the diverse set of technologies utilised for communication, information processing, and data management. It encompasses hardware, software, networking, and digital platforms that enable the creation, storage, retrieval, transmission, and manipulation of data. This includes devices like computers, smartphones, and tablets, along with software applications, internet services, social media platforms, cloud computing and communication networks. ICT serves as the foundation for modern-day connectivity, facilitating the exchange of information across the globe and enabling individuals to access, share, and utilise vast amounts of data efficiently.

Empowering women in Tripura through digital literacy and ICT initiatives holds profound significance for fostering gender equality and socio-economic development. Access to technology equips women with the tools to overcome barriers that have historically limited their participation in various spheres. It enables them to acquire essential digital skills, access educational resources, and pursue online learning opportunities, thereby enhancing their employability and economic prospects. Digital literacy allows women to amplify their voices, advocate for their rights and engage actively in decision-making processes. By bridging the digital divide, empowering women through technology contributes significantly to building inclusive societies and promoting sustainable development.

II. CURRENT STATUS OF WOMEN

Women in India have made commendable progress in various spheres, yet societal norms and cultural practices often confine them to traditional roles within the family and community. While strides have been made, gender-based discrimination and stereotypes persist, limiting women's access to opportunities and decision-making roles. Empowering women to break free from these norms is crucial for their holistic development and contribution to society. The educational landscape for women in Tripura has significantly improved. The efforts taken by the government and NGOs have increased female literacy rates, empowering girls with access to schooling. However, challenges such as high dropout rates, particularly at secondary and higher education levels, continue to impede sustained educational progress. Access to quality education in rural and remote areas also remains a concern, hindering the full realisation of educational opportunities for many girls. Women's participation in the workforce has increased, especially in sectors like education, healthcare, and government services.



However, there is an underrepresentation of women in leadership roles and certain industries due to societal and cultural barriers. Issues such as unequal pay, limited access to training and resources, and societal expectations regarding familial responsibilities often hinder women's career advancements. The adoption of technology is rising in Tripura, but women face disparities in access to and utilisation of technology. Factors such as a lack

of awareness, limited resources, and cultural norms can prevent women from fully embracing digital tools and ICT. Bridging this gap is essential to ensuring women have equal opportunities to leverage technology for their education, employment, and empowerment. Women in India encounter multifaceted challenges. Issues related to healthcare, reproductive rights, gender-based violence, and economic disparities persist. Factors like child marriage, inadequate access to healthcare facilities, and insufficient representation in decision-making processes impact women's overall well-being and opportunities for advancement. Women's status in India is pivotal for devising comprehensive strategies aimed at their empowerment. Addressing the challenges related to education, workforce participation, access to technology, societal norms, and specific issues faced by women is imperative.

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF DIGITAL LITERACY AND ICT FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Digital literacy and ICT proficiency play an important role in the empowerment of women across Tripura, presenting transformative opportunities across various domains. These skills act as powerful tools, transcending geographical limitations and offering women unparalleled access to a vast array of educational resources, online courses, and vocational training. Through digital platforms, women can expand their knowledge, improve their skill sets, and pursue higher education, consequently enhancing their employability prospects across diverse industries. Proficiency in digital skills not only opens doors to employment but also allows women to navigate and thrive in technology-driven sectors such as information technology, digital marketing, data analytics, and remote freelance work. Digital literacy empowers women to explore entrepreneurship and economic self-reliance; access to online marketplaces, social media platforms, and e-commerce tools enables women to initiate and manage businesses from the comfort of their homes or local communities. These digital skills create opportunities for income generation, contribute to local economic growth, and foster a sense of autonomy and financial independence among women.

IV. INITIATIVES PROMOTING DIGITAL LITERACY AND ICT

The initiatives aimed at promoting digital literacy and ICT among women in Tripura are instrumental in bridging the gender gap in technological access and knowledge. These initiatives encompass a range of efforts by governmental, non-governmental, and private sector entities, targeting various aspects of skill development, access to technology, and

educational programmes specifically for women. Government initiatives play a crucial role in promoting digital literacy among women in Tripura. Schemes like the Digital India programme, National Digital Literacy Mission, and various state-level programmes focus on empowering women through technology. These initiatives provide digital literacy training, workshops, and skill development programmes targeting women in both urban and rural areas. They often include special provisions for women from marginalised communities, aiming to ensure inclusive access to digital resources and education. Initiatives like Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) focus on digital literacy in rural areas, aiming to make one person per household digitally literate. In Tripura, these programmes target women specifically, organizing camps, training sessions, and workshops at the village level to impart basic digital skills. The emphasis on reaching rural women is pivotal for bridging the Digital divide and ensuring equal opportunities for all. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sector initiatives play a significant role in promoting digital literacy among women. These organizations conduct outreach programmes, awareness campaigns, and training sessions in collaboration with local communities, focusing on enhancing digital literacy and providing hands-on training. Many NGOs work specifically with marginalized communities and rural areas to ensure that women from all backgrounds have access to digital education. The collaborative efforts between local authorities, community leaders, and educational institutions facilitate innovative outreach programs. These initiatives involve setting up mobile digital literacy vans equipped with computers and internet connectivity in remote areas. They conduct interactive sessions, empowering women with hands-on learning experiences and boosting their confidence in utilising digital tools effectively. Digital education initiatives specifically targeting women have gained momentum in Tripura. These initiatives often focus on empowering women through digital literacy programmes integrated into formal and informal education systems. Schools, colleges, and community centres host workshops, seminars, and specialized courses aimed at enhancing women's digital skills. Additionally, programmes like 'ICT in Education for Girls' aim to ensure girls have equal access to digital resources and ICT tools in educational institutions.

V.CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS RELATED TO PROMOTING DIGITAL LITERACY AND ICT

In remote areas of Tripura, inadequate infrastructure remains a significant barrier to digital literacy. Inadequate power supplies and erratic internet connectivity hinder women's access to digital resources and online educational platforms. Geographic isolation exacerbates these issues, limiting the reach of technological advancements to rural Communities. The Socio-cultural norms and stereotypes often discourage women from pursuing technology-related education or careers. Prevailing gender biases and societal expectations may limit women's access to digital tools and opportunities.

Family expectations, limited mobility, and cultural norms can restrict women from engaging in technology-related learning. The significant challenge is the lack of awareness among women about the benefits of digital literacy and the absence of adequate training opportunities. Many women in rural areas might not fully understand the relevance of digital skills in their lives or lack information on where to access training programs. Economic constraints pose a significant barrier, especially for marginalised women, limiting their ability to afford digital devices, internet services, or enrolment in skill development programmes.

VI.IMPACT OF EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH DIGITAL LITERACY AND ICT

Empowering women through digital literacy and ICT has had significant positive impacts on their lives and society. Tripura, a northeastern state in India, has witnessed positive impacts from initiatives aimed at empowering women through digital literacy and ICT. The Tripura State Rural Livelihood Mission (TSRLM) has facilitated digital literacy programmes for women in rural areas. Through various training sessions and workshops, women have gained skills in using computers, accessing the internet, leveraging digital tools for entrepreneurship, and accessing government schemes. TSRLM aims to reduce poverty by empowering rural communities, especially women, through various interventions and programs. TSRLM is about the empowerment of women in rural areas and the mission to recognise the pivotal role women play in rural economies and society. It seeks to enhance livelihood opportunities by providing training, resources, and support for sustainable

income-generating activities. TSRLM conducts digital literacy programmes targeted at women in rural areas.

These programmes equip women with basic computer skills, internet usage, and knowledge of digital tools. It offers training and support for women entrepreneurs. This includes mentoring, access to resources, and guidance on leveraging digital platforms for business growth. Women are educated and guided on accessing various government schemes related to financial inclusion, healthcare, education, and other social welfare programs through digital platforms. TSRLM focuses on building the capacity and skills of women to enhance their participation in the economy, including sectors such as agriculture, handicrafts, and small-scale industries.

CONCLUSION

The empowerment of women through digital literacy and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) initiatives presents a crucial pathway towards fostering gender equality and driving socio-economic development in Tripura. The multifaceted nature of digital literacy extends beyond mere technical proficiency; it encompasses a spectrum of skills essential for women to engage meaningfully in an increasingly interconnected digital world.

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