

ABOUT THE INSTITUTION

The growth and development of a Nation largely depends on the spread of education and intelligence of the people. There were two great philanthropists for achieving this idealistic vision namely, Late. S.P. Nallamuthu Gounder and Late. Arutchelver Padmabhushan Dr.N.Mahalingam formed an organization called as Pollachi Kalvi Kazhagam, which started NGM College in 1957, to impart holistic education with an objective to cater to the higher educational needs of those who wish to aspire for excellence in knowledge and values. The College has achieved greater academic distinctions with the introduction of Autonomous System from the academic year 1987-88. The college has been Accredited with A++ by NAAC and also as ISO 9001: 2015 Certified Institution. The total student strength is around 6000 +. Having celebrated its Diamond Jubilee in 2017, the college has blossomed into a premier Post-Graduate and Research Institution, offering 26 UG, 12 PG, 13 M.Phil and 10 Ph.D Programmes, in addition to that Diploma and Certificate Courses. The college has been ranked within Top 101-150 in India by NIRF 2024 and ranked 18 th as best Commerce institution in India by Outlook-ICARE Ranking 2024.

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT

The Department of Commerce (Professional Accounting) was established on June, 2012 with a unique vision to cater to the needs of Students pursuing the Professional Courses such as CA, CMA, and CS. The Curriculum is designed to support the students to pursue their Professional courses simultaneously with B.Com (Professional Accounting). There is internship training for Two Years for 2nd and 3rd Year students which is stipulated in curriculum. The regular classes commence from 9.00 a.m to 2.00 p.m and Internship Training from 3.00 p.m to 6.00 p.m. in Auditor's firm. The Strength of the Department is its Qualified faculty team which always focus on the achieving the goals of students and college as well.

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



NALLAMUTHU GOUNDER MAHALINGAM COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

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Vol – 2

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EMPOWERING RURAL WOMEN THROUGH DIGITAL INDIA

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Abstract

Technological advancements can lower trade expenses, allowing rural areas to tap into new markets. Rural goods and services are likely to reach more distant markets at a lesser cost and faster than they are now, thanks to new technologies. Driverless vehicles, for example, can operate 24 hours a day and travel far further distances than traditional trucks, lowering transportation costs and shipment times. Drone-based deliveries are also expected to be deployed in their initial phase in rural areas, where regulations are less stringent, and roads that are not populated by high rise buildings making it easier for drones to maneuver.

Introduction

Empowering Women in rural areas through Technological Solutions,” seeks to address these challenges by implementing targeted initiatives that enhance access to technology, build digital skills, and foster community engagement. By empowering women through technological solutions, we aim to promote gender equality, stimulate economic growth, and create sustainable pathways for development in rural communities. Delivering multiple roles every single day, Women are undoubtedly the backbone of any society. However, they have also been an ignored fraction of the society in many parts of the world. To restore their rightful and dignified status, empowerment programmes need to be initiated to provide a solid foundation to nurture the inner strength and self-esteem for rural women. Education is a potent tool to progress in life serving as a catalyst that has unsettled centuries of restrictions and given women the much deserved platform to set them free and rise as equals.

Rural women constitute a large portion of population in rural India particularly acute for women living in rural households. Women’s poverty is directly related to the absence of economic opportunities and autonomy. Poor access to economic resources education and support services results in their low participation in the decision – making processes. Women are not a Homogenous category and thus have different location specific needs. Inclusive and sustainable development cannot be reached without addressing these diverse needs. Women experience inequalities in healthcare and nutrition, have lower access to employment, lack ownership of property and are also victims of domestic violence. Rural Women who constitute 66 % of total labour in farm production and livestock related activities have little role in marketing or selection of either livestock or

their crop. Market economy trends in the era of globalization have further widened the gap between educational and technological opportunities available for rural women.

There also exists a large divide between rural and urban women. Though, work participation rate of rural women is higher than their urban counterparts, higher work participation rates per se do not indicate a higher level of welfare such as higher educational capabilities and/or asset and income. In fact, the situation is quite dismal for rural women especially for women belonging to SCs/STs and other vulnerable/marginal categories. Work participation rate of female workers in rural areas was higher which stood at 30% as compared to the work participation rate of only 15.4% in urban areas as per census 2011. Most of the rural women are engaged in the unorganized sector, agriculture & allied activities, microenterprises etc. These activities are drudgery – based and low income. Digital technologies have further deepened this gap due to poor digital literacy among rural women as compared to urban women.

Literature Review

Xiao Han¹ (2018) reported that the Internet has experienced dramatic technological development since the late 1980s, fierce debates about the empowering potential of the Internet for women's liberation have also raged. In particular, feminist theorists have grasped this opportunity to enquire whether women can become empowered by the Internet. However, the existing feminist research lacks systematic theoretical frameworks that would help us investigate what roles digital media play in the process of women's empowerment. This sets the scene for creating possible theoretical links between digital media and women's empowerment. The role of Chinese women's groups in the process of women's empowerment will be presented to demonstrate the explanatory value of the framework. Malhotra Ruchi² (2015) indicates that Information technology has revolutionized the world as never before. The benefits accrued from the synergy of knowledge and IT need not be restricted to the upper strata of the society but have to freely flow to all segments of the female population. IT sector is considered to be no discriminating. It is considered to be an equal opportunity employer for men & women. According to the findings of Onkaragouda Kakade and Deepa³ (2021), "Tattimani The Role of Digital India in Rural Women Empowerment- A Case Study of Vijayapura District", It is found from the study that digital India is improving the quality of women's life. It shows that digital India is forming digital infrastructure as a utility for every citizen.

¹ Xiao Han (2018) Women's Empowerment in Digital Media: A Communication Paradigm. File:///C:/Users/Sc%20ST%20Cell/Downloads/Han2018_ReferenceWorkEntry_WomenSEmpowermentInDigitalMedi.pdf on 07-02-2021

² Malhotra Ruchi (2015) Empowering Women through Digital Technology: An Indian prospective, International Journal Of Business Management, Vol.2 Issue-01 PP:502-508, Retrived from: www.ijbm.co.in on 31 December 2019.

³ Onkaragouda Kakade and Deepa, "Tattimani The Role of Digital India in Rural Women Empowerment- A Case Study of Vijayapura District", IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS), Volume 26, No. 5, May 2021

Digital India is empowering women digitally and it also emphasis on universal digital literacy and availability of digital resources or services in Indian languages.

Importance of the Study

Gender equality and sustainable development depend on women's digital empowerment. To close the gender gap in technology access and empower women, the Indian government has launched several digital projects. The Government of India's digital literacy efforts are pivotal in enabling women to have a sustainable future, promoting socioeconomic inclusion, and mitigating gender gaps in digital technology access⁴. This article thoroughly examines the panorama of contemporary digital literacy programmes for women in India. It seeks to evaluate their efficacy, pinpoint obstacles, and investigate viable fixes to enhance the results of digital literacy. The article thoroughly assesses secondary data from government websites and reliable sources, including reports and publications. This article aims to illuminate these issues and offer insights into the complex nature of the digital gender gap in India. The study also examines possible approaches and remedies to overcome these obstacles and raise women's digital literacy. To encourage digital inclusion and empowerment, these solutions include community-based strategies, the integration of mobile technologies, customized training courses, and focused awareness campaigns. This paper aims to inform policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders about digital projects that empower women and promote a sustainable future. It thoroughly analyses available data and identifies key obstacles and opportunities. To bridge the digital gender gap and promote inclusive development, the article highlights the significance of digital literacy as a driver for women's socioeconomic empowerment

Rural Women

Rural women in India are mainly concentrated in agriculture to a much larger extent than men. with around 60% of India's population engaged in farming, women contribute to almost 70-80% of farming activities but are neither legally , nor socially recognizes as farmers. There is significant gender segmentation of operations in agriculture. While men predominate in activities such as sloughing and harvesting which have largely become mechanized these days, women predominate in activities like weeding, transplanting and inter-cropping that involve more drudgery. Technological implements are either not available or women have little access to them.

Women play important roles in the rural economy as farmers, wage earners and entrepreneurs. They also take responsibility for the well-being of the members of their families, including food provision and care for children and the elderly.

Rural women's unpaid work, particularly in poor households, often includes collecting wood and water. Women from indigenous and grassroots communities are often also custodians of traditional knowledge, which is key for their communities' livelihoods,

⁴ **Bushra Faridi and Shahla Shabeeh Shaheen**, "Digital Initiatives For Empowering Women Towards A Sustainable Future", 10.5281/zenodo.13221732

resilience and culture. Yet, women in rural areas face constraints in engaging in economic activities because of gender-based discrimination and social norms, disproportionate involvement in unpaid work, and unequal access to education, healthcare, property, and financial and other services.

Empowering Rural Women

Rural Women Empowerment is a process or a function which aims at taking their own decisions for their personal dependent. Rural women empowerment refers to the creation of an environment for women where they can make decisions of their own for their personal benefits as well as for the society. Women also should be given equal rights like men to really empower them. They need to be strong, aware and alert every moment for their growth and development. Rural women common challenges are related to poverty, education, income, health and safety of the women. After independence of country, India had to face lots challenges which had created a big gap between men and women especially in the field of education. A women can be considered with women empowerment when

- She lives her life independently according to her own lifestyle whether at home or outside.
- She feels to take her own decision according to her choice.
- She gets equal rights in the society like a man.
- She feels safe and secure whether at home or outside at own work place, street, etc

Economic Empowerment of Rural Women

Rural women's economic empowerment is the capacity of women for participating, contributing and benefiting from the processes of growth in various ways that recognize the value of their contributions, respect their dignity and make it possible to negotiate a fairer distribution of the benefits of growth. Women's economic empowerment increases women's access to economic resources and opportunities including jobs, financial services, property and other productive assets, skills development and market information. Women's economic participation and empowerment are fundamental to strengthening their rights and enables them to have control over their lives and exert influence in society.

Digital India

Government of India is offering a number of digital services and schemes viz., Make in India, Bharatmala, Sagarmala, Startup India, Bharat Net, and Standup India. Digital India is mainly focused on three areas namely providing digital infrastructure as a source of utility to every citizen, Governance and services on demand and to look after the digital empowerment of every citizen. Digital India was established with a vision of inclusive growth in areas of electronic services, products, manufacturing, and job opportunities. Digital India aims to provide the much-needed thrust to the nine pillars of growth areas.

Each of these areas is a complex programme in itself and cuts across multiple Ministries and Departments.

Pillars of Digital India

Broadband Highways- This covers three sub components, namely Broadband for All – Rural, Broadband for All – Urban and National Information Infrastructure (NII).

Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity- This initiative focuses on network penetration and filling the gaps in connectivity in the country.

Public Internet Access Programme- The two sub components of Public Internet Access Programme are Common Services Centres (CSCs) and Post Offices as multi-service centres.

e-Governance: Reforming Government through Technology- Government Process Re-engineering using IT to simplify and make the government processes more efficient is critical for transformation to make the delivery of government services more effective across various government domains and therefore needs to be implemented by all Ministries/ Departments.

E-Kranti – Electronic Delivery of Services- To improve the delivery of public services and simplify the process of accessing them. In this regard, several e-governance initiatives have been undertaken by various State Governments and Central Ministries to usher in an era of e-Government. E-Governance in India has steadily evolved from the computerization of Government Departments to initiatives that encapsulate the finer points of Governance, such as citizen centricity, service orientation and transparency.

Information for All- This pillar aims to ensure transparency and availability of reliable data generated by the line ministries for use, reuse and redistribution for the people of India.

Electronics Manufacturing- This pillar focuses on promoting electronics manufacturing in the country.

IT for Jobs- This pillar focuses on providing training to the youth in the skills required for availing employment opportunities in the IT/ITES sector.

Early Harvest Programmes- This pillar consists of a group of different short-term projects which have immediate effect on the Indian digital ecosystem like IT platform for mass messaging, crowd Sourcing of e-Greetings, biometric attendance in the government offices, WI-FI in all universities etc.

Digital Literacy Programs: Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA): Aims to make 6 crore rural households digitally literate

National Digital Literacy Mission: Focuses on digital literacy for rural women

Challenges of Digital India

The government of India has taken an initiative through the Digital India Mission to connect the rural areas of the country with high-speed internet networks. Apart from the various initiatives taken by Digital India, there are several challenges faced by it. Some of the challenges and drawbacks of Digital Mission are mentioned below:

- The daily internet speed, as well as the Wi-Fi hotspots, are slow as compared to other developed nations.
- Most of the small and medium scale industry has to struggle a lot for adapting to the new modern technology.
- Limited capability of entry-level smartphones for smooth internet access.
- Lack of skilled manpower in the field of digital technology.
- To look for about one million cybersecurity experts to check and monitor the growing menace of digital crime.
- Lack of user education.

Digital India Initiatives

The Government has taken up many initiatives under the Digital India campaign. Discussed below are few such important initiatives:

Digi Lockers – This flagship initiative aims at ‘Digital Empowerment’ of the citizen by providing access to authentic digital documents to citizen’s digital document wallet

E-Hospitals – It is a Hospital Management Information System (HMIS) which is a one-stop solution in connecting patients, hospitals and doctors through a single digital platform. Till February 2021, as many as 420 e-Hospitals had been established under the

Digital India campaign

E-Pathshala – Developed by NCERT, e-Pathshala showcases and disseminates all educational e-resources including textbooks, audio, video, periodicals and a variety of other print and non-print materials through the website and mobile app

BHIM – Bharat Interface for Money is an app that makes payment transactions simple, easy and quick using Unified Payments Interface (UPI)

Online Platforms

e-NAM (National Agriculture Market): Provides online market access to farmers, including women

Digital Sakhi: Trains rural women as digital ambassadors for their communities

Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY): Provides bank accounts and financial services to rural women

Digital Banking: Enables rural women to access banking services remotely

Conclusion

Rural women are one of the key elements that aims at achieving the transformational and requirements in terms of social, economical, cultural and environmental for sustainable development. Empowering them is crucial not only for the well-being of individual families and rural communities but also for overall economic productivity given women’s large presence in the agricultural, industrial and services sectors by using digital services. Digital India has the potential to greatly empower rural women by providing access to information, economic opportunities, education, and healthcare. Therefore, it

concluded that the schemes, projects, programmes and services of Digital India are the light houses for empowering rural women.

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