

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

Vol – 1

Editor-in-Chief

Dr.R.Senthilkumar

Assistant Professor, Department of B.Com (Professional Accounting)
Nallamuthu Gounder Mahalingam College (Autonomous), Pollachi, Tamil Nadu – 642 001.

Editorial Board Members

Dr.S.B.Gayathri

Associate Professor and HOD, Department of B.Com (Professional Accounting)
Nallamuthu Gounder Mahalingam College (Autonomous), Pollachi, Tamil Nadu – 642 001.

Dr.N.Sumathi

Assistant Professor, Department of B.Com (Professional Accounting)
Nallamuthu Gounder Mahalingam College (Autonomous), Pollachi, Tamil Nadu – 642 001.

Ms.J.Madhubala

Assistant Professor, Department of B.Com (Professional Accounting)
Nallamuthu Gounder Mahalingam College (Autonomous), Pollachi, Tamil Nadu – 642 001.

Dr.D.Padma

Associate Professor, Department of B.Com (Professional Accounting)
Nallamuthu Gounder Mahalingam College (Autonomous), Pollachi, Tamil Nadu – 642 001.

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

Copy Right: © Department of Commerce -Professional Accounting
Nallamuthu Gounder Mahalingam College (Autonomous),
Pollachi-642 001

Editors: Dr.R.Senthilkumar, Dr.S.B.Gayathri, Dr.N.Sumathi
Ms.J.Madhubala & Dr.D.Padma

First Edition: January 2025

Book Size: B5 Size

ISBN: 978-93-94004-84-1

Copyright

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, mechanical, photocopying, recording, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of the author.

18	Role of Modern Technologies in Rural Women's Entrepreneurship Development Ms. M. Haripriya & Dr. R. Manikandan	82
19	Digital Safety and Security for Rural Women Ms. P. Sudha & Ms. N. Wincy	87
20	Cyber Stalking and Obscenity on The Internet: A Growing Concern in The Digital Age Dr. T. Sumadhi	91
21	Empowering Rural Women Through Digital Literacy P. Anitha	97
22	Digital Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurship M. Kabileshwaran & S. Mohammed	100
23	E-Commerce and Rural Women Empowerment R. Kaviya & Kayalvizhi S. M	104
24	The Role and Initiatives of Digital India for Empowering Rural Women Dr. N. Lakshmi Priya	108
25	Machine Learning for Identifying Exoplanets and Studying Galactic Phenomena Mrs. N. Amirtha Gowri	113
26	E-Commerce and Rural Women Empowerment N. Deepika & Kayalvizhi S. M	117
27	Digital Entrepreneurship and Innovation Mr. Prakalathan A, D.Nivetha shree & A. Srimathi	121
28	Opportunities and Challenges Faced by Women Entrepreneurs Dr. M. V. Sathyabama, Ms. S. Vasundharadevi & Ms. S. Midunarakavi	127
29	Opportunities for Rural Women Entrepreneurs in Tamil Nadu Dr. M. Nagedran & Mr. K. Boopathiraj	131
30	Challenges and Opportunities for Empowering Rural Women Dr. P.V. Nandhini & Ms. B. Nandhini	141
31	Rural Women and Panchayati Raj Dr. P. Jayanthi, S.J. Harinie & S. Mekala	145
32	Rural Women and Panchayati Raj E. GokulaKrishnan	149
33	Rural Women Empowerment and Digital Literacy Initiatives S. Varun Kumar & M. Arul Prasath	153
34	Rural Women Empowerment and Digital Literacy Initiatives Dr. S. Mahalakshmi	158
35	Social Empowerment of Rural Women Through Digital Interventions M. Satheeswari & Dr. R. Manikandan	162
36	Social Empowerment of Rural Women Through Digital Interventions Ms. N. Indhupriya & Dr. G. Gnanaselvi	168
37	Digital Oppurtunities and Challenges for Rural Women Entrepreneurship Dr. S. Poongodi, C. Selva Priya & V. Aruna	174
38	Tele Medicine and Digital Health Services for Rural Women Dr. P Anitha, A. Valarmathi & A. Santhiya	182

RURAL WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND DIGITAL LITERACY INITIATIVES

Dr. S. Mahalakshmi

Assistant Professor in Commerce, Department of Commerce – Banking and Insurance
NGM College, Pollachi

Abstract

This article delves into the crucial intersection of rural women empowerment and digital literacy initiatives, highlighting their potential to transform lives and drive sustainable development. It emphasizes the importance of equipping rural women with digital skills to enhance their access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Key challenges, such as cultural barriers and infrastructural deficits, are addressed alongside strategies like government programs, NGO efforts, and community involvement. By fostering digital literacy, rural women can bridge the gap to inclusion, autonomy, and economic independence, significantly contributing to societal progress.

Keywords: Rural Women Empowerment, Digital Literacy, Sustainable Development, Gender Equality, Economic Opportunities, Digital Inclusion.

Introduction

Rural women play a pivotal role in the socio-economic development of any country. However, they often face systemic barriers such as limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Empowering rural women is not only a matter of gender equality but also a critical step towards achieving sustainable development. One of the most transformative tools for empowerment in the 21st century is digital literacy. Rural women are the backbone of agricultural and rural economies worldwide. They contribute significantly to food security, community development, and economic sustainability. Despite their crucial roles, rural women often face a plethora of challenges such as limited access to education, healthcare, and financial resources, as well as societal norms that restrict their opportunities.

The Importance of Rural Women Empowerment

Empowering rural women enhances their ability to contribute to their families and communities. It helps reduce poverty, improves health outcomes, and fosters economic growth. Education, skill development, and access to resources are foundational to achieving empowerment. When rural women are empowered, they gain confidence and the ability to participate in decision-making processes at various levels, leading to more inclusive and equitable societies.

Strategies for Empowering Rural Women

1. Education and Skill Development

- Providing accessible and quality education tailored to rural settings.
- Offering vocational training programs to develop skills in agriculture, handicrafts, and entrepreneurship.

2. Access to Healthcare

- Improving healthcare infrastructure in rural areas.
- Conducting awareness programs on maternal health, nutrition, and family planning.

3. Economic Opportunities

- Facilitating access to microfinance and credit for women-led businesses.
- Encouraging participation in self-help groups (SHGs) to promote collective economic activities.

4. Legal and Social Support

- Ensuring legal rights related to property ownership and inheritance.
- Addressing gender-based violence through awareness campaigns and support systems.

The Role of Technology in Empowerment

Technology has emerged as a transformative tool in empowering rural women. Digital platforms enable access to information, market linkages, and government schemes. By promoting digital literacy, rural women can participate in e-learning, manage finances online, and even engage in e-commerce to sell their products directly to consumers.

Challenges in Empowering Rural Women

1. Cultural and Social Barriers

- Traditional gender roles and societal expectations often limit women's participation in education and the workforce.

2. Infrastructure Deficits

- Inadequate access to transportation, electricity, and internet connectivity hinders development.

3. Financial Constraints

- High levels of poverty restrict women's access to education, healthcare, and technology.

4. Limited Representation

- Women's voices are often underrepresented in decision-making processes at local and national levels.

Digital Literacy: A Catalyst for Empowerment

Digital literacy refers to the ability to effectively and critically navigate, evaluate, and create information using digital technologies. For rural women, digital literacy can bridge the gap between isolation and opportunity. It opens doors to education, healthcare services, financial independence, and entrepreneurial ventures. With smart phones, the internet, and other digital tools becoming more accessible, rural women can now connect with markets, access government schemes, and even pursue online learning programs.

Key Digital Literacy Initiatives for Rural Women

Governments, NGOs, and private organizations around the world have launched numerous initiatives to enhance digital literacy among rural women. Some of the notable efforts include:

- **Digital India Programme:** The Government of India's flagship initiative aims to transform the country into a digitally empowered society. Programs like PMGDISHA (Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan) focus on providing digital literacy training to rural citizens, with a special emphasis on women.
- **Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Digital Training:** Many NGOs collaborate with SHGs to provide digital training to women. These groups act as platforms for skill-sharing and financial independence.
- **CSR Initiatives:** Companies under their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs often conduct workshops and provide resources for digital literacy. For instance, some telecom companies have set up mobile training vans to reach remote villages.
- **E-Sakhi Programs:** Initiatives like E-Sakhi in states like Rajasthan train women as digital ambassadors to promote technology usage in their communities.

Challenges in Promoting Digital Literacy

Despite these efforts, several challenges hinder the progress of digital literacy initiatives among rural women:

- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Lack of internet connectivity and digital devices in remote areas remains a significant barrier.
- **Cultural Constraints:** Societal norms and gender biases often limit women's access to technology.
- **Educational Barriers:** Low literacy levels among rural women can make digital training more challenging.
- **Affordability Issues:** The cost of devices and internet services can be prohibitive for many families.

Way Forward

To overcome these challenges and ensure the success of digital literacy initiatives for rural women, a multi-stakeholder approach is essential. Governments should invest in improving digital infrastructure and making technology affordable. NGOs and community-based organizations can play a critical role in creating awareness and providing localized training. Private companies can contribute through innovative solutions and CSR programs. Additionally, promoting success stories of digitally empowered rural women can inspire others to embrace technology.

Conclusion

Empowering rural women through digital literacy is not just an option but a necessity for achieving holistic development. It equips them with the tools to overcome traditional barriers and actively participate in the digital economy. By fostering an environment that

encourages and supports digital literacy, we can ensure a brighter, more inclusive future for rural women and their communities.

References

1. United Nations. (2021). *Gender equality and women's empowerment*. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org>
2. Government of India. (2020). *Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA)*. Retrieved from <https://www.pmgdisha.in>
3. World Bank. (2019). *Women's empowerment in rural areas: Challenges and opportunities*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org>
4. OECD. (2018). *Bridging the digital gender divide*. Retrieved from <https://www.oecd.org>
5. International Labour Organization (ILO). (2020). *Empowering women in the rural economy*. Retrieved from <https://www.ilo.org>