

## WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH DIGITAL LITERACY

Dr. Sujata N.Chavan Asst.Prof {G.K.Joshi (Night) Commerce College, Latur}

E-mail: sujataniture79@gmail.com

---

### Abstract

Digital literacy plays a pivotal role in empowering women by granting them access to vital information, educational resources, and job opportunities. It enables women to acquire knowledge, engage in communication, and build connections, thereby amplifying their voices and breaking down social barriers, which helps reduce feelings of isolation. Additionally, digital literacy fosters greater participation in political and civic matters, providing women with a platform to voice their opinions and share their perspectives. It can also enhance job prospects, increase income, and support financial independence through various online avenues. In summary, technology is essential for achieving gender equality. As our world becomes more digital, it is crucial for both men and women to embrace these changes and cultivate technological self-sufficiency, whether for career advancement or personal relationships. Unfortunately, many women still rely on men for various tasks due to a lack of digital skills. From making online transactions to preparing presentations, they often depend on male assistance for these everyday activities. This dependency can lead to decreased self-esteem and reduced confidence. However, significant barriers to digital literacy for women remain, including limited access to technology, inadequate training, cultural and social limitations, and online gender-based violence. Tackling these issues is essential for promoting gender equality and empowering women through digital literacy.

**Keywords:** Women Empowerment, Digital Literacy, Technology.

### INTRODUCTION:

Women in ancient India were celebrated and revered as divine figures. Yet, in the medieval period, their standing in society diminished considerably. They were often viewed as subordinate, with their roles largely confined to nurturing children, attending to family needs, and overseeing domestic responsibilities.

In the current digital landscape, the connection between women and technology is significant. Acknowledging the vast potential that women hold in modern society, it is imperative for them to take on a more active role. Women often experience inequality, perceived as lacking the necessary backing from the advancing technologies that are vital for improving human resources. By developing competencies in information and communication technology, women can enhance their understanding, acquire new insights, and possibly create additional revenue streams. This situation arises from our inadequate approach to these issues, characterized by a lack of the appropriate mindset or a genuine understanding necessary for performance evaluation. It emphasizes the critical need to identify true indicators that signify social progress. Women's empowerment will not achieve its maximum potential if we limit our focus to education and employment opportunities for women.

### THE NEED FOR DIGITAL LITERACY

Recent global developments reveal a clear movement towards virtual platforms across various sectors. Communication, financial transactions, and meetings are now largely taking place in online settings. Moreover, the access to financial resources has transitioned primarily to digital channels. Thus, to advance gender equality or at least lessen the gap, it is crucial to engage with the digital transformation. This scenario underscores the significance of digital literacy as a fundamental step in empowering women and promoting their entrepreneurial aspirations.

**DIGITAL LITERACY AS A SIGNIFICANT ADVANTAGE:**

Digital literacy encompasses a foundational understanding of digital media and the ability to use technology in a purposeful and effective manner, which is essential for success in the contemporary technology-oriented landscape. A basic indicator of this competency is our proficiency in operating devices such as computers and smartphones, as well as utilizing internet services, online banking, websites, e-commerce platforms, and fundamental software applications. Digital literacy encompasses foundational understanding of digital media and the ability to use technology in a purposeful and effective manner, which is essential for success in the contemporary technology-oriented landscape.

Having strong digital skills is crucial for empowering women. Digital skills allow women to obtain information, engage with others, and create chances to take part in different economic and social endeavors globally through online resources. Women who possess digital proficiency will experience considerable benefits in areas like enhanced access to education, employment opportunities, healthcare, social connections, personal safety, and entrepreneurship, among others.

**ADVANTAGES OF DIGITAL LITERACY IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:**

The numerous advantages associated with digital literacy effectively address the challenges women have faced while working remotely.

1. Women who possess adequate digital skills have the opportunity to work from home on a full-time basis while managing their children and family life. Their proficiency in multitasking within the household context often makes them exceptionally qualified for both professional engagements and caregiving roles.
2. The safety of women remains intact when they engage in remote work. This arrangement shields them from the hazards typically linked to commuting, as well as the psychological and physical harassment frequently encountered in traditional workplace settings. Therefore, working from home presents a considerably safer alternative.
3. Employment in digital literacy and its related fields does not demand the same level of physical strength as that required in factory settings. Therefore, women can choose to pursue non-technical careers. Additionally, it is evident that many women are actively participating in non-technical roles in the oil and gas and mining industries.
4. The ability to pursue education is frequently hindered by family duties, financial constraints, and, in many cases, the safety and location of one's environment. Nevertheless, digital literacy plays a crucial role in overcoming these barriers, allowing women to tap into a wide range of educational resources and tools.

5. The acquisition of digital literacy enables women to access online databases focused on health and hygiene, which facilitates enhanced health at a more affordable price. A variety of digital tools and applications are available, frequently at little to no cost, allowing them to effectively track and manage their physical and mental health.

6. Obtaining government information and services that are not locally accessible can be quite challenging. Improving digital literacy is crucial for individuals to effectively access distant financial services, government resources, and legal assistance.

There is a growing trend of women becoming entrepreneurs. Examples of this include Chitra Gurnani Daga of Thrillophilia.com, Upasana Taku of MobiKwik, and Divya Gokul Nath of Byju's, who are all influential figures in the digital technology industry.

#### 1. Digital tools for Entrepreneurship:

The rise of new technologies, particularly mobile devices, presents major opportunities for economic growth. Digital innovations that improve trade and market access can help women establish their own businesses. Below are tools to assist them in their entrepreneurial paths.

a. Social Media: Tools including Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube can be instrumental in advertising and promoting products. They offer various services, assist in brand introduction, and connect with customers across the globe. Digitally savvy women can harness these platforms to effectively engage with a larger audience.

b. E-Commerce Platforms: A variety of websites, including Shopify and GoDaddy, provide women with the opportunity to launch their own online stores and sell their products directly to customers.

c. Online marketplaces: Platforms like Amazon, Flipkart, and eBay serve as online marketplaces that facilitate women in launching and managing their own businesses. Through these platforms, they can reach a vast audience of potential customers.

d. Virtual meets: The rise of virtual meetings has transformed the way work is managed across different locations, particularly in remote environments, thanks to online meeting tools such as Zoom and Google Meet. Teams can now engage in discussions and collaborate effectively while working from their individual residences.

#### 2. Digital literacy for financial Education

Navigating digital financial services is a significant barrier, but improving digital literacy can help individuals overcome it. This knowledge allows access to banking services, budgeting tools, and investment platforms that support women's financial management. Below are some online tools to aid this effort.

a. Mobile Banking apps: Mobile banking applications are conveniently available on smartphones, allowing users to access banking services and manage their finances with ease. Notable apps like Paytm, ICICI Pockets, SBI Buddy, and M-Pesa are tailored to be user-friendly, making them suitable for individuals with limited literacy skills.

b. Microfinance Institutions: Numerous microfinance institutions, like Annapurna and Ashirwaad Microfinance Pvt Ltd, offer small loans at lower interest rates and various financial services to those without access to traditional banking. They also provide financial literacy training

and business development support, which are especially beneficial for illiterate women lacking basic financial skills.

c. Women's Institute for Financial Education (WIFE): As non-profit organization, it focuses on delivering financial education tailored for women. Through a variety of online courses, webinars, & personalized financial coaching, it aims to support women in attaining financial empowerment.

3. Tools to be used for women's safety:

The challenge of safeguarding women has intensified, but there are multiple approaches that can aid in their protection. Presented below are a variety of online applications and tools that can effectively contribute to women's safety.

a. Location sharing maps: There are several applications, such as Google Maps, Life 360, and Snap chat's live location service, that women can use to share their location with trusted individuals in case of an emergency. This feature is advantageous for those exploring unfamiliar places, as it allows for real-time updates on their location.

b. Safety wearables: Devices like smart watches are instrumental in aiding women during times of distress. By activating certain features or pressing a designated button, these devices can promptly inform emergency contacts.

c. Safety apps: Smartphones can be equipped with applications such as 112, My Safetipin, Sheroes, and Smart 24x7, allowing women to send out emergency alerts and seek assistance when needed.

d. Social media platforms: The media is instrumental in raising awareness and speaking out against violence. Hashtags such as #MeToo, #TimesUp, and #YesAllWomen serve as powerful examples of how social media can spotlight the prevalence of violence against women.

4. Digital platform in support of women's health:

Several digital platforms are available that focus on supporting women's health and well-being. Here are some examples:

a. Telemedicine Platforms: Such services empower women to receive healthcare services from a distance, which is vital for those who experience challenges in accessing medical care, particularly in rural or remote locations. Platforms like Teladoc, Sesame Care, and MeMD offer the opportunity to consult with healthcare providers via video conferencing.

b. Women's Health apps: These software applications provide women with the capability to monitor their menstrual cycles, track fertility, and manage pregnancy. The apps featured are Clue, Flo, and Ovia.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Alongside the aforementioned considerations, the following suggestions are intended to bolster the concept of Empowerment.

1. The notion that teamwork surpasses individual achievement is widely recognized. Creating an online forum dedicated to Women Entrepreneurs would facilitate discussions on various challenges and enable participants to exchange solutions and ideas, fostering a supportive community among women facing comparable issues in their businesses.

2. Learning through mistakes is an effective educational method. A website featuring failures and lessons learned would benefit women by allowing them to apply successful solutions. The HSE website ([www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)) documents incidents and lessons in industrial health and safety, providing actionable knowledge.
3. In summary, the government can contribute significantly to this process of fortification by issuing subsidies and grants, much like the aid given to farmers, fishermen, and nascent businesses, thus ensuring they receive the crucial support needed for their growth.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

In conclusion, while the process of empowering women has been initiated, it is still in the early stages and requires further enhancement and support from the government to emphasize the importance of this initiative. Such actions are crucial for achieving gender equality. Studies have demonstrated that women, when provided with equal skills and opportunities as their male counterparts, can significantly contribute to the social, economic, and political progress of their societies and countries. Providing them with digital tools will advance their ability to compete on equal footing with men. It is vital for society, including women and government, to take necessary steps to bring about this change.

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

1. Abubakar, N. H., & Dasuki, S. I. (2018). Empowerment in their hands: Use of What's App by women in Nigeria. *Gender, Technology, and Development*, 22(2), 164- 183.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09718524.2018.1509490>
2. Tabasum Niroo, W., & Crompton, H. (2022). Women's empowerment through learning using technology. *Asian Journal of Distance Education*, 17(2), 135-152.  
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7117324>
3. [https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1210&context=teachinglearning\\_fac\\_pubs](https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1210&context=teachinglearning_fac_pubs)
4. <https://www.cashify.in/womens-day-top-safety-apps>
5. <https://sheroes.com/articles/importance-of-digital-literacy-for-women/MTY4MTA>