

An insight into digital technology for empowerment of women in India

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Abstract - Women empowerment is the backbone of any Country Development. Today as everything goes digital, the role of digital literacy and its benefits are innumerable. With the availability of Smartphones the digital technology plays an important role for all round development of women in India. As the Smartphones and internet have reached to remote and rural places in India, the women in India should be aware of different digital initiatives taken by Government of India for them. This paper emphasizes on how the women in India can be digitally literate with the help of digital initiatives taken by Government of India. The paper discusses about the Economic, Educational, Health, Legal, and Social Empowerment of women through digital Literacy. Women safety is the most important factor in India whether it may be in home security (Domestic violence, Dowry etc.) or out of home security (Threats, murders, rape, eve teasing etc...). For the safety and security of women with help of their smartphones different digital initiatives, apps which are connected to Police stations are launched by Government of India. These Different digital security measures , initiatives, apps taken by Government of India and others for women are also discussed in this paper.

Keywords Digital Literacy, women Empowerment, Digital initiatives

I. INTRODUCTION

Percentage of female population in India is 48.5 % according to Government of India

Ministry of statistics and programme implementation. India has a super power of women. According to Census India 2011 in India there are 943 females per 1000 males and in urban area 929 females per 1000 males and in rural areas 949 females per 1000 males. Today we are living in digital India. According to Census India 2011 The literacy rate among women is 64.64%, literacy rate among women in urban area is 79.11% and among rural area is 57.93% near about 35.36% percent women in India are illiterate.

We live in era of technology, we can't imagine our life without cell phones, internet. Technology has captured all our domains. Technology can act as a weapon for women safety. Technology includes all kinds of Machines, gadgets , Mobile Apps, internet , helpline No., helpline websites ,Radio, TV,CCTV cameras , smart watches, digital pen, voice recorder. But to use the technologies women must be digitally literate Digital literacy means the knowledge about operation of digital devices like mobile, computer, etc and awareness about internet, majority of women in India are digitally illiterate. There is urgent need for women in India to be digitally literate. "National policy on empowerment of women" launched by Govt. of India in 2001" also aims to create a fear free environment for women and elimination of all kinds of crimes against women

National digital literacy mission (NDLM) has a mission of making every Indian citizen digitally literate. In a family at least one person should be digitally literate as said by prime Minister Narendra Modi which is vision of his" Digital India" campaign launched in 2015. NDLM gives training in two levels. In 1st level Basic digital literacy that is how to use digital devices like mobile, computer, tablet, ATM Machines etc... And use of internet on these devices. In 2nd level training people should be able to use various e-governance and other facilities which are available online on digital devices.

II. OBJECTIVES

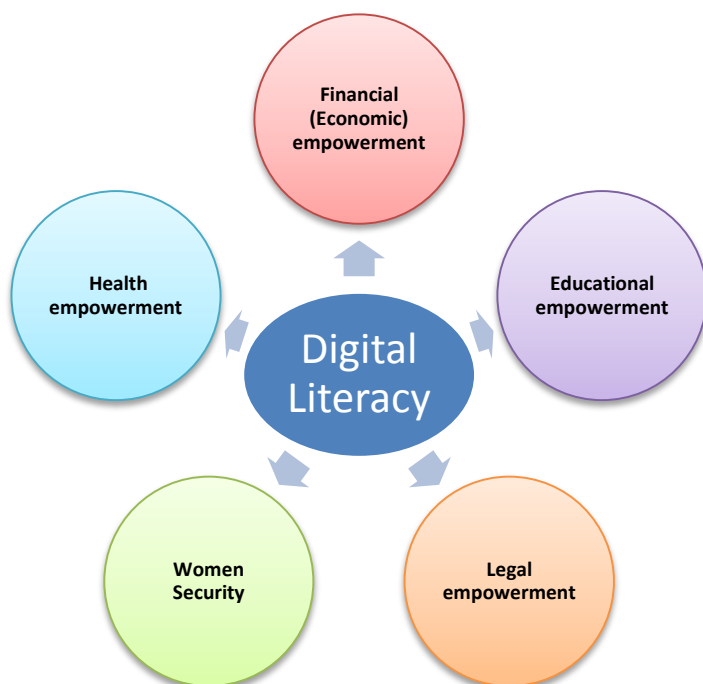
To make women aware of various digital facilities

To make women aware of various government digital initiatives and schemes

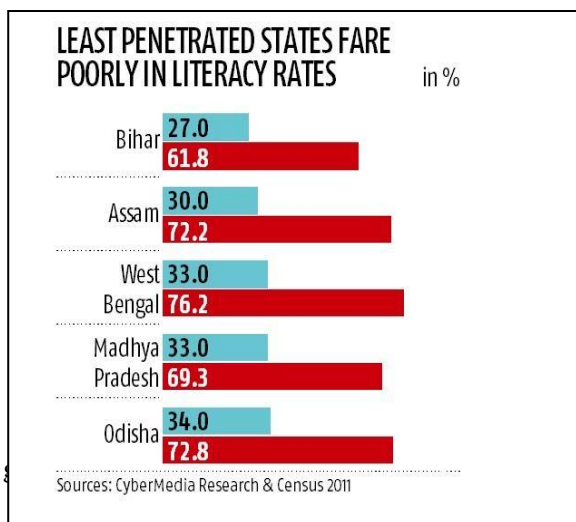
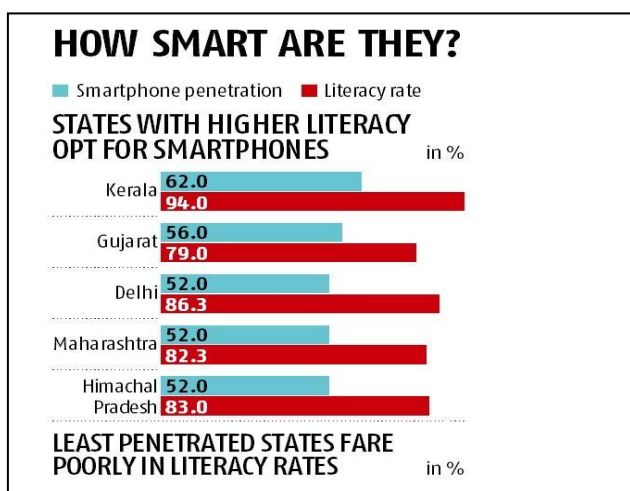
Methodology

A descriptive study of how women empowerment can be achieved through digital literacy has been explained. Study is based data available through primary and secondary sources.

There are different ways through which empowerment of women can be done through digital literacy 1) Financial (Economic) empowerment 2) Health empowerment 3) Educational empowerment 4) Social empowerment 5) legal empowerment 6) Security



According to IAMAI (Internet and Mobile Association of India) report 2019 there are 451 Million people in India who are internet users. Out of 451 Million users 12 years and above age person internet users are 385 Million and within age group of 5-11 years uses internet on mobiles, computers and other digital devices of family members and other peoples. This shows that maximum numbers of internet users are school and college going students. According to IAMAI report number of internet users in rural and urban area is near about 192 million. Although Telecom companies has lowered prices for their data plan and though internet is available for least price to common people still there is a wide gap between male and female internet users.



- Economic empowerment**

Women in India are always among the weaker section of society. In urban areas though the number is less but still women have some liberty, have jobs, education facilities ,internet facilities, smart phones, but still majority of women are digitally illiterate. Because they don't have any training on how to use digital devices and internet, they are not aware of any online facilities and if few of them are aware of online facilities they don't know how to use it. They have to depend on others for any digital assistance.

Women are backbone of any family; if a single woman in family is digitally literate she can manage her family well. As now she will be aware various online facilities ,so instead of standing in queue for many hours at electricity office, shops, banks she can do her work in minutes, it will save a lot of time for her which can use for other works. Majority of Indian women do not have a

separate individual bank account, they are not aware of digital banking, M-banking, online shopping, government loan facilities for small and large scale business, Government schemes, various money investments, how to save their money in safer way and many more. But if they are digitally literate they can take advantage of these schemes and become self dependent.

III. DIGITAL INITIATIVES TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Mahila -E-Haat

Launched by Indian Government in 2016 under ministry of women and child development provides digital platform for women entrepreneurs which uses digital technology to showcase and sell different products like clothing ,bags, fashion accessories etc.It helps in social and economic empowerment of women. It is open to women above 18 years of age. Simple sign in and payment methods which can be used on mobile also makes it reliable and easily accessible.

PAHAL (DBTL) Direct benefit transfer

Mahila Shakti Kendra

Adhar enabled payment system

- **Health empowerment**

Indian women always neglect their health either she belong to Rural or Urban , Rich or poor National Health Portal of India website (Health India) with a vision of giving good facilities to citizens of India with a minimum cost, by using various mobile apps and portal.

IV. DIGITAL INITIATIVES TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA FOR HEALTH EMPOWEMENT

e-Hospital

Integrated health information system

m-Raktkosh

Pradhan Mantri Matritva Vandan Yojna,

Pradhan Mantri Surkshit Matritva Abhiyan,

Swachhgrah ,Janai Surksha.

- **Educational Empowerment**

The literacy rate for female has been increased from 53.67% to 64.63% from 2001 to 2011 according to data of Government of India Ministry of statistics and programme implementation. The increase in literacy rate is only about 20% and nearly 1/3 population in India is illiterate due to sexual harassment in School and college, lack of female teachers, lack of transportation facilities, safety concerns. Rural area literacy rate has been increased from 46.70% in 2001 to 57.93% in 2011 (by 24%) and in Urban area from 73.20% in 2001 to 79.11% in 2011 (by only 8%) as per records of Government of India Ministry of statistics and programme implementation. But if girl student in rural, far remote areas get safety devices, the parents might be willing to send them for further education.

According to new Indian Express there are 13500 villages where there is no school yet in India , but Mobile phones have reached. So until the villages get school, teachers can go to that villages and can give basic digital literacy training to women. If a single women is digitally literate she can make her family, friends digitally literate with knowledge of all facilities she can contribute in the development of family and village and ultimately the country.

V. DIGITAL INITIATIVES TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA FOR EDUCATIONAL EMPOWERMENT

DISHA Digital Saksharata Abhiyan launched by Government of India to make Angananwadi Asha workers, authorised ration dealers in India to be digitally aware of facilities provided by Government, so that every person in India will be digitally literate and play their role in making of government, help in growth of country.

Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Sakshrata Abhiyan PMDISHA

e-pathshala

e-basta

e-sign

Digilocker

National Scholarship Portal

- **Social empowerment**

Mobile phone knowledge of many women in India is limited to only the use you tube, Whats app and face book, but they lack in knowledge of different digital social initiatives by Government and other trusts.

VI. DIGITAL INITIATIVES TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND OTHERS FOR SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT

Internet Saathi designed by Google and Tata trust gives training to local women to become Internet Saathi (Trainers) to help other women to learn how to use internet which will be crucial for improving their standard of living. With digital literacy now Internet Saathi is also making women entrepreneurs through digital training so they can earn digitally.

Khoya Paya

Mother and child Tacking System

Sms based Mid Day meal monitoring scheme

IRCTC connect

- **Legal empowerment**

Being digitally literate women will be able to get information about various acts and laws for women at a click on their digital devices. For example if they face any kind of domestic violence, sexual harassment, eve teasing etc. They will have knowledge of various laws and act and how to use them.

VII. DIGITAL INITIATIVES TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA FOR LEGAL EMPOWEMENT

Digital Police Portal

On this anyone can file a cyber related complaint, can check its status, can get copy of FIR and related issues.

Legal cell

Legal cell is there on Portal of National commission for women to help women for any legal aid

Tele-Law launched by government of India on 20 April 2017 provides free legal aid by panel of expert lawyers through video conferencing at 1800 CSC (Common Service Centre) spread across 11 states. A women has to reach to CSC and she will get free legal aid through videoconferencing

- **Security**

The security concern for women in India is very serious because not a single woman in India is safe. Starting from new born girl child to 80 year old women no one is secure in India. "Nirbhaya" rape case in December 2012, recent 2019 Hyderabad rape case and similar cases against women reflect the present security status of women in India. Crime against women in India has been continuously increasing.

Starting from the status of women written in ManuSmruti present status of women in India is not much different today. When a girl steps out her feet in world outside her home security concerns starts. Even the women in home are not safe they may face domestic violence, sexual harassment by family members and known persons, child abuse cases and many more. So woman in India is not safe anywhere. So security concern for safety of women is a big hot topic in India. Our Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed that it's duty of parliament to protect women. Crimes like Rape, sexual harassment, Acid attack, female foeticide, child marriage, Dowry cases, Domestic violence happens every day in all parts of India.

By various security apps and women helpline websites and 24 X 7 Police helpline numbers women will feel less burden in working in night shift in industries and other work places. India women will be able to enjoy all their legal rights like freedom of speech and expression etc. given by constitution of India freely.

VIII. DIGITAL INITIATIVES TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND OTHERS FOR SECURITY OF WOMEN

Vith U app

This app was started by 'Gumrah' serial on V channel on TV, In case of emergency if you twice press the power button of your smart phone continuously, this app starts operating, it sends signals to your contacts which are in Smartphone with location sharing of the victim in every 2 minutes.

Suraksha App

Government of Karnataka launched Suraksha App. This app is connected to Control room in Police station and police patrolling devices. Women who is in danger if she holds her Smartphone, Camera of Smartphone records a video of 10 seconds. The control room in police station will get the signal along with the video, so that they can easily track the women in danger. "The app which can be downloaded free on Smartphones, will help women in distress alert police for help, as it is linked to the police control room and patrolling vehicles in city". Said a police official while talking about app's reach and potential benefits as quoted by Sanchit Khera 19th Oct 2017 in his article on "These tech innovations are creating impact on women safety Concerns".

Nirbhaya App

This app is supported by digital India by Ministry of Electronics and information Technology, Government of India. If women feel unsafe, she has to open the app in Smartphone, the app will be activated. In a danger situation, if the Smartphone falls from women's hand, the alarm will make sound which will make surrounding people alert. This app will send signal with message and with location sharing to contacts feed in the app and location of victim will be visible to him.

Himmat App

Launched by Delhi police. Works same as Suraksha App

IX. CONCLUSION AND REMARKS

Though the Government has taken a number of digital initiatives but there are many cultural, social, economical, educational barriers in path of digital literacy. But some incentives like awarding a mobile phone and other educational digital gadgets on successful completion of a training or certificate course in digital literacy will increase their inclination towards digital literacy, which will help in bringing them into main stream of society. Because of different digital literacy workshops, trainings organized by Government for women the number of digitally literate women are increasing.

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