Understand the Impact of Digitalization on Hill Women of Champawat District

Bhupender Oulakh[1], Punam Rai[2]

Assistant Professor, Govt. P. G. Degree College, Champawat
Email: *bhupinder.aulakh117[at]gmail.com*

Research Scholar, Govt. P. G. Degree College, Champawat

Abstract: *Women are the backbone of home management and responsible of all kinds of house chores. In the era of digitalization, women are actively participating in online business as well as online shopping, bill - paying, school fee payment, e - banking, and e - marketing. Additionally, it helps to improve the economic status of women in our nation. But it is urgent to investigate how much digitalization has impacted the way of life of the women in the hills of Uttarakhand. The objective of the present study was to understand the usage pattern of digitalization in hill regions of Champawat district of Uttarakhand state by the woman. Total 120 women aged between 18 to 40 years were selected from the villages of Champawat district purposively. The data was collected in google form. The finding of the study revealed that majority of the women used internet to check WhatsApp status, Instagram and making reels after that paying fees online, shopping online and paying electricity bill online. After the start of Digital India program, there have been many improvements in the status of women, now the situation is that the women here are more technology friendly and more aware. Hence, it can be concluded the digitalization programme uplifted the educational and social status of the women in hills.*

Keywords: Women, digitalization, online activities, Digital India, empowerment

1. Introduction

Women make up the largest share of rural population in India and play a crucial role in rural sector. Women are engaged in economic activities like handicrafts, sewing or rolling cigarette, weaving of basket and fabrics, and working as vendors in cities. Women in rural areas need the following information urgently: Educational opportunities out of the village. Job opportunities in formal and informal sectors. Government assistance programs for career advancement within traditional boundaries. Modern Child care facilities. Legal provisions to fight against Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence & Social Injustice. By providing the information aboves, IT played an important role in rural women empowerment (Monga, 2018). According to a study conducted by the National Statistical Survey Organisation (NSSO) in 2020, rural women's literacy rate is much lower than urban women's. The study also found that urban women have achieved a certain level of self - sufficiency over the years, whereas rural women are more dependent on others. This dependency of rural women has resulted in various issues, such as being misled and deceived. According to the report of UN, the situation of women in rural areas is very sad. Of the total population of India of 135 crore, 65.13 percent live in the rural pockets and women account for 48 percent of the total rural population. About 74.8 percent women are employed as farmers, while only 9.85 percent own a piece of land. After the globalization of the world in 1990, the technology industry was initially dominated by men. However, with the growing involvement of women in the industry over the years, the usage of technology among urban women has increased. However, despite the promises of digital revolution, the availability of information and technology among rural women is still not the same as it is among urban women. In addition to better education, rural women also have a significant gap in technology usage compared to urban women. The objective of the present study was to understand the usage pattern of digitalization in hill regions of Champawat district of Uttarakhand state by the woman.

2. Review of Literature

Gupta and Arora (2015) studied the impact of digital India project on India's rural sector. The study found that many schemes have been launched in digital India to boost agriculture sector and entrepreneurship development in rural areas. This program has also set the stage for empowerment of rural Indian women. It provides a huge opportunity to use the latest technology to redefine India the paradigms of service industry. It also pointed out that many projects may require some transformational process, reengineering, refinements to achieve the desired service level objectives (Rani, 2016). Vijaya and Seethalakshmi (2019) indicated that finance is an important domain of Indian women. Indian Women participate in the administration of the family. Finance, might from managing everyday expenses, to determining investment decisions of the family. Needless to say, the Digitalization of Economy will have tremendous impact on the activities of the Indian women. In general they observe that women are able to accept the change in the present environment. The growth in female literacy rate (65% in 2017 - 18) across the country has also created a positive impact on digital adaptation of the women. The tech sector is the second largest sector with women employees after agriculture. This shows how women have carved a place for themselves in Technology related fields also.

Dimpal (2018) stated that Indian villages look far behind in comparison to urban India. The coming age is of knowledge economy. With increasing use of smart phone, it is possible now to provide different services with one click. Midha (2016) stated that digital India is a great plan to develop India for knowledge future but its improper implementation due to inaccessibility and inflexibility to requisite can lead to its failure. Though digital India program is facing number of

challenges yet if properly implemented it can make the best future of every citizen. So we Indians should work together to shape the knowledge economy.

Martin and Erickson (2013) in the book, 'Social Media: Usage and Impact', states that social media act as a powerful means of social relations in this 21st century which is continuing to emerge as a major force in global world. He opines that social media is a coordinating tool for nearly all of the world's political movements. The author also examines the current scenario of social media monitoring and engagement of corporations in social media like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube.

Venkateswararao (2018) indicates that the Digital India programme was started with a broad vision to convert India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. One of the three important areas of Digital India is forming digital infrastructure as a utility for every citizen. The second important area of digital India is providing governance and services on demand. The ultimate objective was to make all government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through common service delivery outlets, and ensure efficiency, transparency, and reliability of such services at affordable costs. The third important area in digital India is digital Empowerment of Citizens. This also places emphasis on universal digital literacy and availability of digital resources or services in Indian languages. In this direction, Government of India had introduced 115 digital India initiatives. Out of all the initiatives there are certain digital India initiatives which empower rural women and urban women in particular. In this paper an attempt is made to present some of the important digital India initiatives which empower women.

Arpita and Nilu (2017) in their research article they reported that government services are accessible by the citizens electronically by improving online infrastructure as well as internet connectivity. The vision of digital India is the development in the field of including electronics services, products, manufacturing and job oriented schemes etc. Digital technologies including mobile application and cloud computing is causes an important role in rapid development for economic growth and digitally empowered Indian citizen across the world. This paper overviews the concept of Digital India and its impact on Indian Society.

Sivapriya et, al. (2018) examines that digital India has been influencing the economy in various ways by creating more job opportunity, better delivery services, technological sectors. It will always help in better Governance. Digital India has been an area of interest of numerous researches from various disciplines because of its great significance and influence on the economy as a whole and particularly the technological sector.

Srivastava (2017) indicates that digital India programme is necessary to address certain challenges in the way of its successful implementation like digital illiteracy, poor infrastructure, low internet speed, lack of coordination among various departments, issue pertaining to taxation etc. If implemented properly, it will open various new opportunities for the citizens of the country and therefore it requires a lot of efforts and dedication from all departments of government as well as private sector considering the current status of the programme.

Parihar (2017) examines that the digital technology has revolutionized the world. Post 1990s, with the advent of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in India, enumerable benefits have accrued to all because of the synergy of knowledge and ICT but these benefits need not be restricted to only some. Digital technology has proved to be a non - discriminating medium which provides equal help and opportunities to people, cutting across gender barriers. The digital technology has been used most efficiently and effectively by the government and the civil society alike to bridge the gender gap in India.

Gurumurthy and Nandini (2018) examined that, this research paper seeks to analyse Digital India from a gender perspective, evaluating its implications for women's empowerment and gender equality. Digital India, as a commonplace terminology has attained the status of a boundary object: a concept that is highly plastic, allowing diverse interpretations, but still recognisable to actors from very different socio - structural locations for a certain common core. In the different discursive universes of public policy, political performance and mainstream public debate, the idea of Digital India occurs frequently. For policymakers, it is a flagship programme; for members of the political class, it is emblematic of a resurgent Indian nation that is transforming into a powerhouse in the global digital economy; while for citizens, it may be an inspirational ideal of upward social mobility or a paradigm shift in transacting with the state. Therefore it can be concluded that the Government of India had introduced several digital initiatives for empowering different sections of the society. It had also introduced some initiatives especially for the empowerment of women. The Digital India programme promises to transform India into a digitally empowered society by focusing on digital literacy, digital resources, and collaborative digital platforms.

3. Material and Method

The purpose of this research study is to understand the impact of the Digital India programmes on rural women in the Champawat District, Uttarakhand State. For the purpose of this study, a purposive sampling method was used. The questionnaire was constructed in google form and distributed link among large population of women age between 18 to 40 years. A total of 120 respondents have been received from all 5 villages, including Nagnath, Bajrikot, Dhakna badola, Joop, Banlekh.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Data Analysis

Among the 120 participants, 161 (55.3%) female were in age bracket of 19 - 30 years old.97 (80.83%) were married and 77 (64.17%) were college students. Nearly half of the female were post graduated. It was interesting to note that women education status has been improved in hills also.

The detail of the demographic factors is presented in the Table 1 below: -

Table 1: Demographic - wise distribution of Respondents, N=120

S. No.	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	**Age**		
I	18 - 23years	104	86.66
Ii	24 - 28years	9	7.5
Iii	29 - 33 years	3	2.5
Iv	34 - 40 years	4	3.3
2	**Marital Status**		
I	Unmarried	97	80.83
Ii	Married	23	19.17
3	**Occupation**		
I	Student	77	64.17
Ii	Service	02	1.67
Iii	Housewife	38	31.67
Iv	Entrepreneur	03	2.5
4	**Education**		
I	Intermediate	10	8.33%
Ii	Graduation	46	38.33%
Iii	Post graduation	56	46.66%
Iv	other	09	7.5%

Most of them the women respondents 65.2 percent are in the age group between 25 to 45 years which indicate that productive age group participates in developmental programmes. A decade ago 85.3 percent women were found to be married but now it was reduced to 80.83 percent. it showed that after a decade the women are more carrier oriented than ten years ago in hills of Uttarakhand. A decade ago, only 22 percent women completed their higher secondary education. The above mention data indicate the education level among informal grass root women workers in hilly Uttarakhand was not good. (Nivedita et. al, 2014).

Table 2: Usage pattern of ICT by hill women
The finding of the study revealed that more than half of the young women were spends more than 2 to 4 hours on their mobile phone. According to Howarth (2023), the average person spends 3 hours and 15 minutes on their phone each day. And 1 in 5 smartphone users spends upwards of 4.5 hours on average on their phones every day.

Table 2: Usage pattern of ICT by hill women of Champawat, N=120

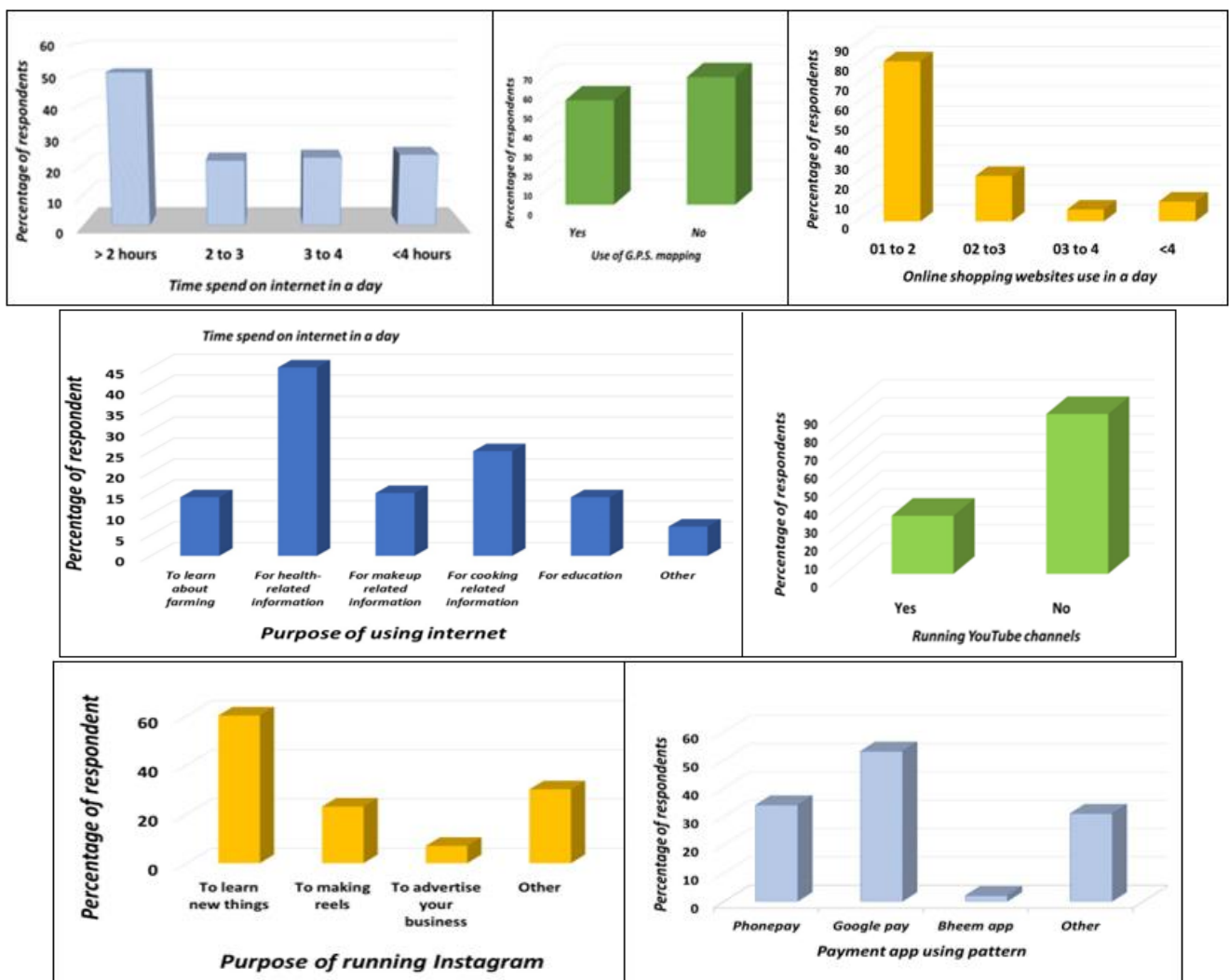| S. No.	Usage pattern of ICT	Frequency	Percentage
1	**Hours spend on mobile**		
I	Less than 2 hours	51	42.9%
II	2 to 3	22	18.5%
III	3 to 4	23	19.3%
IV	More than 4 hours	24	20%
2	**Number of websites used for online shopping in a day**		
I	1 - 2	81	70.3%
II	2 - 3	23	19.5%
III	3 - 4	6	5%
IV	More than 4	10	8.33%
3	**Running YouTube channels**		
I	Yes	32	26.66%
II	No	88	73.33%
4	**Purpose of running Instagram**		
I	To learn new things	60	52.65%
II	To making reels	23	20.2%
III	To advertise your business	7	6.1%
IV	Other	30	25.0%
5	**Purpose of using internet**		
I	To learn about farming	14	11.66%
II	For health - related information	45	37.5%
III	For makeup related information	15	12.5%
IV	For cooking related information	25	20.8%
V	For education	14	11.66%
VI	Other	7	5.83%
6	**Educational app using pattern**		
I	Wi - fi study	32	26.66%
II	Drishti learning app	13	10.83%
III	Unacademy	27	22.5%
IV	YouTube	13	10.83%
V	Telegram	6	5.0%
VI	Other	29	24.16%
7	**Payment app using pattern**		
I	Phone pay	34	28.33 %
II	Google pay	53	44.16%
III	Bheem app	02	1.66%
IV	Other	31	25.83%
8	**Use of G. P. S. Mapping**		
I	Yes	54	45.8%
II	No	66	55%
9	**Assist children in online teaching**		
I	Yes	65	58.16%
II	No	55	45.83%
10	**Satisfaction through digitalization**		
I	Yes	103	87.9%
II	No	17	14.16%

The above finding revealed that more than half of the women use the phone between 2 to 4 hours. This time is very much and may cause pain in eyes and major eye related problems.

Further finding showed that maximum 70.3 percent women were visited one to two online shopping websites in a day for online shopping while 19.5 percent women were used more than three online shopping websites in a day for shopping. The responses showed that the Amazon, flip cart and Myntra were the most preferable sites for women to buy apparels.

It showed that after the launching of digital India scheme, women in hills also upgraded their shopping method and shifted from window shopping to online shopping. It was cleared from the study conducted by Karishma Chaudhary (September 2018) that greater number, 49 percent spend INR 2, 000 per month on online shopping, while 40.2 percent spend between INR 2000 - 4000 per month, 6.2 percent spend between 4000 - 6000 per month and the remaining 4.6 percent spend greater than INR 6, 000 per month shopping online in India.

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In continuation it was observed that 26.66 percent women run their own YouTube channel, which shows that now a days women in hills are more actively using smart phone than before. More than half of the female said that they were used Instagram to learn new things while 6.5 percent female were used Instagram to advertises their own business, 37.3 percent women use internet to get health - related information and 20.8 percent women used it to search cooking related information and in this sequence 11.7 percent women used internet to get information related to farming. The data finding revealed that 26.66 percent women use Wi - Fi study educational app and 22.51 percent women use Unacademy educational app and in this sequence 24.16 percent women use other educational apps for getting education. It might be due to the vast coverage of Digital India Scheme which provide a dynamic plate form to the hill women to enhance their educational status and increased awareness about technology.

The above study revealed that slightly less than half 44.16 percent women pay online payment through Google pay online payment app and 28.33 percent women use phone pay online payment app. In 2018 Chaudhary's study revealed that various modes of payments used by respondents. Due to the increase of mobile penetration and increased usage of internet, India is expecting a huge growth of digital payments - wallet has a share of 38 percent, with the launch of Google wallet and Apple Pay; it is expected to streamline and standardize digital payments and thus offer better life to customers in India. This 2.1 percent of payments through mobile wallet, may grow bigger, if the marketers create more awareness and make the customers feel safe in transaction as it is highly preferred in future due to governments initiative of going digital.
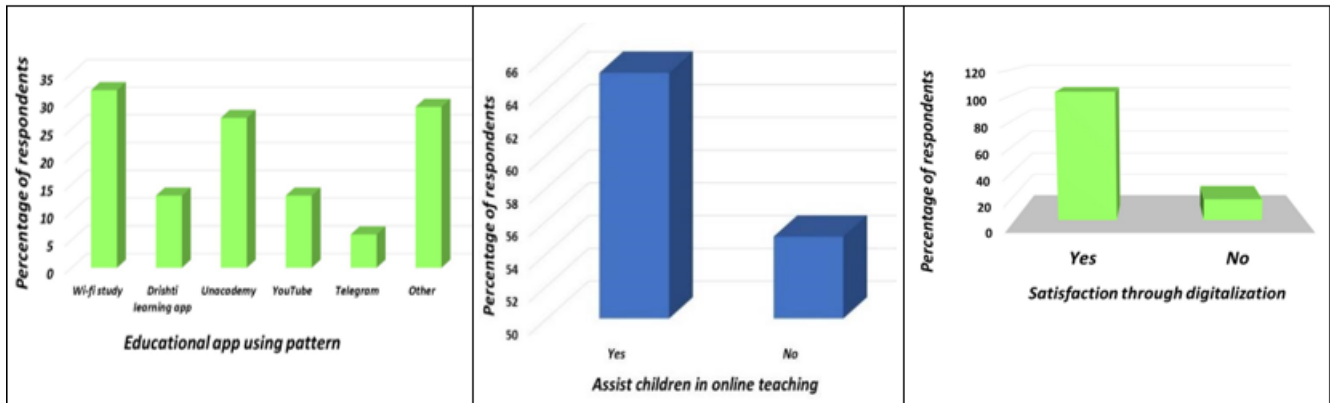
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Figure 1: Illustration of Usage Pattern of ICT by Hill Women of Champawat

The study revealed that 45.8 percent women use GPS mapping and more than half 58.16 percent women are able to help their children in online education. The study showed that 87.9 percent women are satisfied with the medium of digitalization such as online payment, online shopping, online travel reservations, online teaching etc. There are 14.16 percent women who are not satisfied through digitalization, the reason for this could be that they are not well aware of it due to which they are not able to take proper advantage of technology. This entire study shows that the condition of women in Champawat district of Uttarakhand has improved a lot in comparison to earlier times. They have more job satisfaction due to digitalization. It helps to change women attitude toward their job weather at home or workplace. Now, women are more educated and career oriented than before and they are capable of doing their own work. There is no need for her to depend on anyone else for her work because she completes her work herself through new technology (Oulakh and Vinay, 2017). After the start of Digital India program, there have been many improvements in the status of women, now the situation is that the women here are more technology friendly and more aware. they are now able to do things like online shopping, online bill payment, online travel reservation, running their own business, running their own YouTube channel, helping their children in online education etc. This makes it clear that after the Digital India program, women have now become more aware and self - reliant. Women faced problem to less extent while using mobile phone. Further, most women now searching for jobs by using their smart phones and internet facility and they are earning money (Avani and Leena., 2016).

5. Conclusion

India's evolving modern landscape is providing immense opportunities for women empowerment. The Women empowerment program promotes the social and economic development of women through community - based reserve funds bunches that enable individuals to save money, avail of credit, build financial literacy, and invest in income generating activities. The women empowerment programs further advance abilities building, confidence, access to data and assets and community action that positions women as confident decision makers and leaders in their households and communities. The study finds that digital India is enhancing the quality of life for women. It demonstrates that digital India is creating digital infrastructure as a service for every citizen. It is making all government services available to common people and ensuring efficiency, transparency and reliability of these services at affordable prices. Digital India empowers women digitally and focuses on universal digital literacy and accessibility of digital resources/services in Indian languages.

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