

ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF DIGITAL LITERACY AMONG RURAL YOUTH THROUGH A COMMUNITY-BASED AWARENESS PROGRAM

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Introduction:

Digital literacy has become an essential skill for education, employment, communication, and access to government services. However, a significant gap still exists between urban and rural populations in terms of access to digital knowledge and technology. Rural youth often possess smartphones but lack of the skills and confidence to use digital tools effectively and safely.

This project focuses on assessing the current level of digital literacy among rural youth and improving their digital skills through a structured community-based awareness and training program. By conducting surveys, identifying gaps, and organizing hands-on training sessions, the project aims to empower rural youth to confidently use computers, the internet, digital payments, and online services while practicing safe online behaviour.

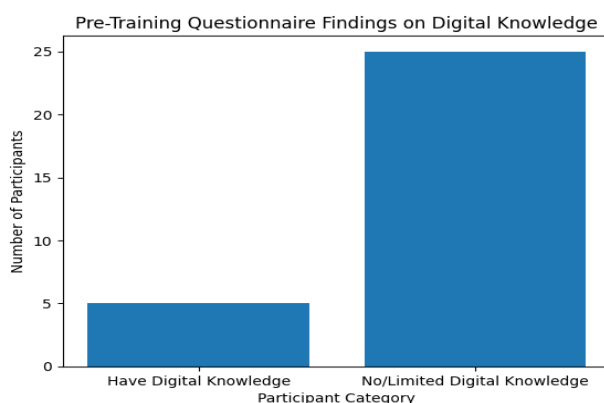


Figure 1: Pre-Training Questionnaire Findings on Digital Knowledge

Objectives:

1. To assess the present level of digital literacy among rural youth through surveys and observation.
2. To identify gaps and challenges in using digital devices and online platforms.
3. To design and conduct awareness and hands-on training sessions on basic digital skills.

4. To educate participants on cyber safety, digital payments, and e-governance services.
5. To evaluate the improvement in digital skills through pre-test and post-test analysis.

Methodology:

1. The project begins with field surveys and interviews to understand the current digital knowledge of rural youth. The collected data is analysed to identify key learning needs. Based on the findings, training modules are prepared covering computer basics, internet usage, email communication, digital payments, government e-services, and cyber safety.
2. Hands-on training sessions and awareness programs were conducted in the community at the computer centre using laptops, projectors, and internet facilities. Participants are guided through practical demonstrations and practice activities. Finally, a post-assessment is carried out to measure the improvement, and the overall impact of the program is recorded. Based on this assessment, the expected outcomes of the program are determined.

Result and Conclusion:

In conclusion, the project is expected to significantly improve digital skills, confidence, and awareness among rural youth. Participants will be able to use digital tools independently for education, communication, accessing government services, and performing digital transactions safely. The program also promotes community involvement, ensuring long-term sustainability of digital learning. This initiative helps in reducing the digital divide between rural and urban populations.

References:

1. Government of India, "Digital India Programme," Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
2. UNESCO, "Digital Literacy in Education," UNESCO Publications
3. van Dijk, J., "The Deepening Divide: Inequality in the Information Society," Sage Publications.
4. National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) Guidelines, Government of India.

Future Scope:

The future scope of this project includes:

1. Extend the program to more villages and include a larger number of rural youth.
2. Prepare digital learning booklets and handbooks in the local language (Kannada).
3. Collaborate with NGOs, and community centres to conduct continuous training programs.
4. Expand digital literacy training to women and senior citizens in the community.
5. Develop simple online training videos and digital learning resources for wider reach.
6. Design this project as a replicable model that can be adopted by other educational institutions.
7. Train selected participants as "Digital Volunteers" to spread awareness within the community.
8. Organize special workshops connecting digital literacy with employment opportunities.