

AN EVALUATION STUDY ON DIGITAL SAKSHARATA ABHIYAN AMONG RURAL FEMALE POST GRADUATE STUDENTS OF VIJAYAPURA DISTRICT

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Abstract: National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) or Digital Saksharata Abhiyan (DISHA) is a flagship programme of the Indian government led by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. The mission aims to make one person in every family e-literate, empowering them digitally and mainly focusing on rural population. The government has set up state-wise training centers and partners who are engaged in conducting the course and educating the citizens enrolled in the programme. The study focuses on the awareness of DISHA among the rural female post graduate students of the Vijayapura district of Karnataka which has one of the lowest literacy and digital literacy rates.

Educated rural women still face digital barrier which holds them back in growing professionally. There is a need to check the status quo of DISHA among rural women to improvise the programme and overcome the lacunas if any. This study introspects the mode and quality of DISHA and how it is received by rural female post graduate students. Sample consists of 150 post graduate female rural students on whom a structured questionnaire was administered.

Keywords: Digital Literacy, DISHA, Rural women

Introduction: National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) or Digital Saksharata Abhiyan (DISHA) is an ambitious project aimed at putting an end to digital divide among the citizens of India. The campaign stresses on Digital Literacy and at least making one in each family digitally literate. Digital literacy is the ability of individuals and communities to understand and use digital technologies for meaningful actions within life situations (Nowell, 2014). NDLM aims to empower the rural to come in par with the urban in terms of being able to make use of the opportunities. Those who can operate computers stand a better chance than those who cannot, though literate and otherwise competent, to get even a secretarial job let alone an administrative one (Rao, 2005). This study focuses on how NDLM is empowering rural post graduate female students in being digitally connected and how the students found this training to be. It is clear that, a digitally connected India can help in improving social and economic conditions of people living in rural areas through development of non-agricultural economic activities apart from providing access to education, health and financial services (Ravi, 2016).

Review of Literature: Suman Rani (2016) through her descriptive cum analytical research attempts to know the impact of Digital India on aspects of governance and improve the quality of life of citizens. Sharma et al. (2015) explore all the aspects of Digital India Campaign where in the technology and connectivity will come together to make an impact.

Statement of the problem: An Evaluation Study on Digital Saksharata Abhiyan among Rural Female Post Graduate students of Vijayapura District.

Methodology: The study employs quantitative method of survey which was conducted by

administering structured questionnaire on 150 female post graduate students selected through multi stage sampling from Vijayapura district.

Objectives:

1. To know about access to computer and Internet
2. To know the awareness level about NDLM
3. Source of information regarding NDLM
4. To gauge the effect of NDLM on digital knowledge of the respondents
5. To know the opinion of the respondents on the mode of training and exams under NDLM

Table 1: Access to Computers and Internet

Computer Access							
Laptops		At home		University Library		Cyber cafes	
92	61.33%	35	23.33%	150	100%	23	15.33%
Internet Access							
Mobile		At home		University campus		Library	
144	96%	13	8.66%	78	52%	150	100%

According to table 1, Cent percent of the respondents have access to computer in university libraries, followed by respondents who own laptops (61.3%), only 23.3 percent of the respondents have computer access at home and 15.3 percent have access to computers from cyber cafes.

It is a welcoming find that cent percent of the respondents have access to internet at libraries. Great majority (96%) of the respondents' access internet through their mobile phones, followed by University campus (52%) and only meager percentage (8.6%) of respondents have internet access at their homes.

Table 2: Awareness of National Digital

Literacy Mission

NDLM	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	91	60.7
No	59	39.3

Table 2 depicts the awareness level of National Digital Literacy Mission among the respondents. As per table 2, more than half (60.7%) of the respondents are aware of NDLM and slightly more than one third (39.3%) of the respondents are not aware of NDLM. This shows that there is still the need of awareness generation about National Digital Literacy Mission.

Table 3: Source of information on NDLM

Source	Frequency	Percentage
Newspapers	20	13.33%
Radio	13	8.6%
TV	15	10%
Internet	49	32.6%
Teachers	22	14.6%
ResourcePersons	31	20.6%

Along with the level of awareness among the respondents, it is very much necessary to know the source which has provided them with the information on NDLM. According to table 3, majority

(32.6%) of the respondents have got to know about NDLM, followed by resource person (20.6%) engaged by the government for the same purpose, Teachers (14.6%), newspapers (13.3%), Television (10%), and Radio (8.6%). It is clear that the source of information is quite spread over all the categories and there seems to be opportunity to improvise the penetration of information through all the sources for better output.

Table 4: Impact of NDLM on Computer and Digital Knowledge

Impact	To a great extent		To a moderate extent		To a minor extent		Not at all	
	13	8.6%	52	34.6%	43	28.6%	42	28%

Table 4 gives the impact of NDLM on computer and digital knowledge of the respondents. Only little more than quarter (34.6%) of the respondents have had an impact to a moderate extent on their computer and digital knowledge. It is frightening to know that almost equal number of respondents opine that NDLM has had an impact to a minor extent (28.6%) and NDLM has had no impact at all (28%) on their computer and digital knowledge. Only 8.6 percent have voiced that NDLM has had an impact to a great extent.

Table 5: Mode of Training and Exams

Mode of Training	Highly Satisfactory		Moderately Satisfactory		Less Satisfactory		Not at all Satisfactory	
	21	14%	35	23.3%	51	34%	43	28.6%
Exam	Highly Satisfactory		Moderately Satisfactory		Less Satisfactory		Not at all Satisfactory	
	27	18%	41	27.3%	49	32.6%	33	22%

Table 5 depicts the opinion of the respondents on the mode of training and the exams what they have taken up under NDLM. Only 23.3 percent and 14 percent of the respondents opine that the mode of training has been moderately satisfying and highly satisfying respectively. It is very shocking to know that majority (34%) of the respondents find the training less satisfactory and nearly quarter (28.6%) find the training not at all satisfactory. When interviewed, the respondents were of the opinion that the training was hardly given for few days at some centers or it was not all given, many respondents have appeared for the exams directly without any training.

When it comes to exams, the respondents were asked to rate on the understandability and easiness of the questions which appeared on the online exams and over all opinion about NDLM. Only 18 percent and 27.3 percent of the respondents opine that they found the exams highly satisfactory and moderately satisfactory

respectively. It is depressing to know that 32.6 percent and 22 percent, who form the majority of the respondents found the exams less satisfactory and not at all satisfactory respectively. The opinions expressed varied from lack of training and question being too technical for their knowledge.

Conclusion: As the statement goes “The digital divide can never be contained in isolation but the effort has to be multi-dimensional and multi-pronged” (Rao, 2005) achieving the dream of Digital India, efforts should be put forth through all the available channels. From this particular study it is evident that, administration of the noble project of NDLM is the main bottleneck, which needs to be monitored for better success of National Digital Literacy Mission. Though the penetration of internet and computer facilities have been drastically improved, there is a need for supervision on the local levels to oversee the proper functioning of the programme. The vision of digitally empowered India

will be a success only when the training is successful at the grass root levels.

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