

Assessing the Influence of Digital Literacy on the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in and Around Chennai

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of digital literacy on the economic empowerment of rural women in and around Chennai. Digital literacy plays a crucial role in promoting inclusive growth by enhancing access to livelihood opportunities, financial services, and entrepreneurial activities. The study adopts a multidimensional framework that includes digital skills and competency, access to digital infrastructure, awareness and adoption of digital platforms, and training and support systems as key determinants influencing economic empowerment. Primary data were collected from 464 rural women through a structured questionnaire using convenience sampling. The study employs Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the proposed framework. The results confirm the reliability and validity of the measurement constructs. The findings indicate that digital skills and competency, access to digital infrastructure, and training and support systems have a significant positive influence on economic empowerment. Among these, training and support systems emerge as the strongest predictors. However, awareness and adoption of digital platforms do not show a significant direct impact, suggesting that awareness alone is insufficient without practical skills and continuous support. The study concludes that digital literacy fosters economic empowerment when supported by adequate infrastructure and sustained training, offering important policy insights for promoting inclusive and sustainable rural development.

Keywords: Digital literacy, Economic empowerment, Digital skills, Training and support systems, Digital inclusion

