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Attitude of the rural people towards digital literacy

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Abstract

Twenty first century is considered as a digital era. Due to the advancement in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), everything has been digitalized. In order to utilize the benefits of such technological advancement, people must have adequate knowledge and favourable attitude towards performing different activities on digital mode. The study was conducted on 120 members of Jorhat and Golaghat District of Assam to assess the attitude of the respondents towards digital literacy and to find out the difference of attitude of male respondents with female respondents on digital literacy. It was found that a large proportion (44.17%) of the respondents had a moderately favourable attitude towards digital tools and services, 22.50 per cent had highly favourable attitude and followed by least favourable attitude (33.33%). There was no significant difference in attitude of male respondents on digital literacy with the attitude of female respondents.

Keywords: Digital literacy, rural people, Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Introduction

Digital literacy means having the skills that need to live, learn, and work in a society where communication and access to information is increasing through digital technologies like internet platforms, social media, and mobile devices. In order to get maximum benefit from digital advancements, people should have good knowledge, attitude and practice on digital activities. Keeping digital gadgets does not mean digitally literate. For becoming digitally literate, one has to have the good knowledge and favorable attitude to participate in the digital society. If the people have good attitude towards digital activities and services, then only they can rely on online/digital activities.

The favourable attitude of rural people towards ICTs is very much necessary for obtaining benefit of effective and efficient information and communication tools which would build confidence among the rural people to perform any digital activities efficiently. The people who have trust online/digital activities; they can improve the quality of their work by easily accessing online resources including online lecture, webinar, online training, and videoconferencing, searching videos, social media, library databases, e-mail correspondence, online banking and also online shopping by using online platforms.

In order to meet the people's needs and to meet the country's benefits, it is necessary to find ways to increase the digital literacy level among the rural people. All of these will contribute to India's rural growth. Therefore, evaluation of rural people's attitude towards digital literacy is important, which will help the policy makers to plan different policies and strategies for the development of favourable attitude on digital literacy among the rural people which will help them to empower themselves in this technological era.

Material and Methods

The present study was conducted in the Jorhat and Golaghat District of Assam. From these two districts, The Krishi Vigyan Kendra Jorhat, Kaliapani and Krishi Vigyan Kendra Golaghat, Khumtai were selected with the purpose that these two institutions are situated near to Assam Agricultural University. From these two Krishi Vigyan Kendras all the adopted villages were enlisted and then three numbers of villages from each Krishi Vigyan Kendras i.e. 6 numbers of villages were randomly selected. From each selected village twenty respondents were selected randomly where ten were men and ten were women. So the total number of respondents was 120 numbers. The research design adopted for the present study is exploratory cum descriptive. Following a review of the relevant literature, a structured interview schedule was prepared to assess the attitude of the people towards digital literacy and to find out the difference of attitude of male respondents with female respondents towards digital literacy.

The schedule was consisting of 30 attitude statements and the responses were scored as '5 = strongly agree', '4 = Agree', '3 = Undecided' '2 = Disagree' and '1 = strongly disagree'. On the basis of the responses, the data were tabulated and analyzed with the help of appropriate statistical tools such as frequencies, percentage, mean, category interval method and Independent t-test.

Results and Discussion

Existing level of attitude of the respondents towards digital literacy

The data in the table 1 reveals that a large proportion

(44.17%) of the respondents had a moderately favourable attitude towards digital tools and services, 22.50 per cent of the respondents had highly favourable attitude and 33.33 per cent of the respondents had least favourable attitude towards digital tools and services. It may be due to the reason that the respondents had medium level of knowledge on digital literacy.

Malakar and Deka (2021) and Naik *et al.* (2021) also reported similar findings where majority (77.00%) of the respondents had moderately favourable attitude towards digital literacy.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents according to the level of attitude towards digital devices and services N=120

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Less favourable	40	33.33
Moderately favourable	53	44.17
Highly favourable	27	22.50

Ranking of the attitude statements regarding digital literacy

The table 2 depicts that ranking of the attitude statements regarding digital literacy. This table reflects that majority of the respondents had agreed with statement that "Internet is very useful if people can use it in an effective and efficient manner" with mean score 4.75. Also respondents had positive attitude towards the statement that "people can perform different activities by using the smart phone" with mean score 4.42, followed by the statement "Peoples personal information available on the Internet may be misused" with mean score 4.30, followed by the statement "People bothered

about the security issues related to the Internet" with mean score 4.30. At the same time they have low agreement with the statement "Reading e-book is more comfortable than physical book" with mean score 2.15, also with the statement "Knowledge and skills on digital devices will widen job opportunities" with mean score 1.65.

From the table, it can also be concluded that the respondents had low level of agreement with the statements which depicts about some advanced digital practices. Therefore, adequate awareness and training programme on these aspects can assist the respondents to improve the attitude of the respondents towards digital literacy.

Table 2: Ranking of the attitude statements regarding digital literacy

Sl. No.	Statements	Mean Score	Rank
1.	Internet is very useful if people can use it in a effective and efficient manner	4.75	I
2.	People can perform different activities by using the smart phone	4.42	II
3.	Peoples personal information available on the Internet may be misused	4.30	III
4.	People bothered about the security issues related to the Internet	4.30	IV
5.	The Internet helps to get the latest knowledge than other resources	4.28	V
6.	Excessive use of smart phone results in people becoming isolated	4.22	VI
7.	It is difficult to do/perform advanced technology related work	4.22	VII
8.	Excessive use of computer results in people becoming isolated	4.18	VIII
9.	Excessive use of smart phones can cause health problems	4.15	IX
10.	Excessive use of computer can cause health problems	4.10	X
11.	People love to use computer and other digital devices than being with their friends/relatives	4.10	XI
12.	Internet can provide quick and latest information of different parts of the world.	4.05	XII
13.	It is not easy for every people to follow advancements in the digital world	4.00	XIII
14.	Use of the Internet is enjoyable	3.95	XIV
15.	Use of the Internet makes learning fun	3.82	XV
16.	People are interested in a career that involves the extensive use of digital devices.	3.80	XVI
17.	Internet is difficult to use.	3.78	XVII
18.	People can perform different activities using computer	3.58	XVIII
19.	People can develop their skills and knowledge by the use of digital devices	3.40	XIX
20.	Basic knowledge and skills are required to perform different activities in any digital devices	3.37	XX
21.	Internet destroys human creativity.	3.37	XXI
22.	Life becomes easier with the help of internet	3.17	XXII
23.	Using the digital devices and Internet is important in human life	3.10	XXIII
24.	Digital devices and internet enables to accomplish tasks more quickly	2.83	XXIV
25.	Computer is very comfortable to use.	2.63	XXV
26.	It is easy to find any information in the internet than library.	2.37	XXVI
27.	Using the Internet is not waste of time	2.33	XXVII
28.	People can learn effectively without using any digital device	2.22	XXVIII
29.	Reading e-book is more comfortable than physical book	2.15	XXIX
30.	Knowledge and skills on digital devices will widen job opportunities	1.65	XXX

Difference of attitude of male respondents with female respondents on digital literacy

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Table 3: Difference of attitude of male respondents with female respondents on digital literacy

Variables	Mean knowledge score	t' value	Sig.
Attitude of male respondents	107.78	1.547	0.124 NS
Attitude of female respondents	105.65		

NS=Non Significant

It is evident from the table 3 that there was no significant difference in attitude of male respondents on digital literacy with the attitude of female respondents. It may be due to the reason that both male and female members have same level of knowledge on digital literacy, which ultimately reflects on their attitude towards digital literacy. That is why they might have the same level of attitude towards digital literacy.

Conclusion

From the findings it can be concluded that, the rural people have moderately favourable attitude towards digital literacy and the respondents had low level of agreement with the statements which depicts some advanced digital technology related practices and there was no significant difference in attitude of male respondents on digital literacy with the attitude of female respondents. In order to improve the status of digital literacy among the rural people, it is important to improve to level of knowledge among the people which can be achieved by conducting different trainings and awareness programmes regarding the benefits of using digital device and performing activities through digital mode. As a result of digital technology's ability to reduce transaction costs, enable real-time events, and provide exact information, people have a chance for personal progress, which will help India's rural economy expand.

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