

Perspectives of Working and Non-Working Individuals on the Role of Digital Literacy towards Gender equality

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Abstract: Digital technology is an important part of daily life, and research examines the role of digital literacy in promoting gender equality across diverse fields. The primary aim of this study is to compare the perspectives of working and non-working individuals regarding how digital literacy influences gender parity. To achieve this, the research evaluates five distinct dimensions of gender equality: gender awareness, social equality, educational equality, economic equality, and rewards and entitlements. Analysis was conducted using both descriptive statistics (percentage, mean & SD) & inferential statistics (independent t-tests). The findings indicate that working individuals exhibit a significantly more positive attitude toward the role of digital literacy in driving economic equality and securing fair rewards and entitlements. Ultimately, employed individuals maintain a stronger conviction that digital competence serves as a powerful vehicle for achieving comprehensive gender parity.

Keywords: Digital literacy, gender equality, gender awareness, economic equality, and rewards and entitlements

1. Introduction

Digital literacy has become a critical ability today, influencing chances in education, career, and personal development. In an increasingly digital age, the ability to successfully use technology and obtain information online is critical for success. However, the digital gap remains large, with many individuals without access to the required skills and resources.

According to GSMA study, 393million adult in developing country do not own mobile phone, & women's worldwide were 8% less likely to own a cell phone than men's. There is a gender difference in both digital access and meaningful digital use. According to several studies, women use mobile devices and the internet in different ways than men. Women, for example, utilize fewer digital services (mainly voice and SMS) since their gadgets are less costly and sophisticated. Women also use the internet less frequently and for fewer reasons, as well as digital services less frequently and intensively (Web Foundation, 2015; Web Foundation, 2016; LIRNE Asia, 2019; GSMA2020). This disparity in digital uses limit women accesses to full range of options available. This study aims to compare the perspectives of Working and Non-Working Individuals on the role of digital literacy towards gender equality. This study explore how digital literacy can help bridge the gender gap.

Gender equality is achieved when people of all genders have equal rights, duties, and opportunities. Gender equality prevents assault on women and girls. It is necessary for economic development. Communities that respect women and men equitably are more secure and healthier. Gender parity is an individual right. Everyone gains from gender parity.

Equality does not suggest that men and women will grow identical, rather that their rights, responsibilities, and chances will not be defined by gender at birth. Gender equality means considering women's and men's desires, needs, and goals, so recognizing the diversity of women and men. Gender equality is not simply a women's issue; it ought to intrigue and involve both men and women. Equality among men and women is regarded as both a human rights issue and a requirement and predictor for enduring people-centered development.

Gender equality may be defined as the dilemma of establishing equality as sameness, asserting difference from the male norm, or altering all existing norms and standards of what is/should be female and male (Walby 2005, Squires 2005, and Verloo 2005). Gender equality is a wide concept most clearly understood in relation to social exclusion, which is the systematic exclusion of people based on variables such as ethnic background, race, gender, economic position, place of residence, language, or health status. According to Kaur and Singh (2020): "Gender inequality acknowledges that men and women are treated differently in the education field, healthcare, employment opportunities, economic participation, decision making, political participation etc."

Gender equality is defined as men and women having equal access to accessible amenities. It also refers to any action, policy, or performance that reflects members of society's consistent, comprehensive, and institutionalized attitudes regarding women as equal creatures in sectors such as work, education, and so on. Gender equality, as defined by UNICEF, entails equal privileges, resources, opportunities, and safeguards for men, women, and

children. It is not required for girls and boys, or women and men, to be the same or treated equally. The dimensions of the gender equality are as follows-

1.1 Gender awareness:

Gender awareness was capacity to observe societies through lens of gender role & how these have impacted women demands in comparison to men. Gender awareness attempts to improve the lives of both men and women. Gender prejudice results from a lack of knowledge, which can contribute to unjust behaviors. Gender awareness is the recognition that there are socially driven distinctions between men and women based on acquired behaviors. Gender awareness is the recognition that men, women, boys, and girls have distinct roles, responsibilities, and needs.

1.2 Social equality:

Social equality occurs when all individuals in a particular society have equal rights, privileges, and status, which might encompass civil liberties, liberty of expression, independence, and equitable use of certain government goods and welfare services, despite their gender. Social equality creates a need for equal results for men and women, as well as persons from various classes, races, ethnicities, nations, sexual orientations, disabilities, and so on. Social equality advocates for equal legal treatment for all people, regardless of gender or sex. Social equality is linked to equal chances.

1.3 Educational equality:

Educational equality is the pursuit of fairness, justice, and impartiality in education, regardless of gender. Equality in education refers to the equalization of individual disparities among learners. Every individual should have an equal and appropriate chance to develop his gift and obtain an education tailored to his requirements, talents, and aptitudes. It refers to the belief that all students should have equal access to education, regardless of color, gender, handicap, sexual orientation, or class.

1.4 Economic equality:

Economic equality refers to income and wealth distributions that are equal. Economic equality refers to a scenario in which the distribution of resources or products among individuals is deemed equitable. Simply put, economic equality refers to a fair playing field in which everyone has equal access to money. Economic equality refers to equal distributions of money & opportunities of various group in society. Economic equality does not imply equal treatment, same rewards, or equal pay for everybody. It refers to providing equal and enough possibilities for everyone to work and make a living. It also implies that the essential needs of all should be met before the exceptional demands of a few are satisfied. The disparity between affluent and poor should be minimized. There should be an equitable distribution of wealth and resources in society.

1.5 Equality in rewards and entitlements:

Equality in rewards and entitlements implies that there is no gender bias in the allocation of rewards and entitlements between men and women. It asserts that every individual has equal rights to obtain rewards and entitlements based on their equal efforts.

2. Literature review

Kumari (2020) found that digital literacy has empowered women in a variety of ways, including social, psychological, and economical. Digital literacy has become a social changes agent, assisting & supporting women empowerment in a varieties of way, including raising worldwide awareness of women's rights and difficulties, as well as combating prejudice and stereotypes throughout the world.

Tyers A and Banyan Global, (2020) conducted survey research on inequalities between genders in young children's access to digital media. South Asian nations had the highest discrepancies. For instance, in Pakistan and Nepal, boys' rates of internet use were quadruple and twice that of girls, respectively. In Nepal, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, the percentage of boys who owned a phone was over 30% higher.

Kennedy, Binder etal. (2020) showed emergence of gender inequality in health & well being across 1st 2decades of life. It was found that son preference was evident in some settings. As shown by higher than expected male

female sex ratio at birth in India, Vietnam, & China & excess mortality of girls in some South Asian & Pacific nation.

Adeosun and Owolabi (2021) found that “gender disparity was substantial in regions, education, location, and marital status, with more education contributing to higher pay for women”. Married women were shown to be more deprived.

Patil (2021) brought into notice the role of information and communication technology in women's empowerment. The findings of the study showed that ICT has increased “women's access to job market and improved entrepreneurship”. The use of ICT has increased the average household income in village. Use of ICT has improved governance also. ICT empowers a woman in various area likes social, educational, psychological, political, technological & economical.

Kamolrat Intaratat (2021) investigated the scenario of workforces with digital literacy and skills among marginal workers in six ASEAN nations. The results of this research show that a situation of labor forces pertinent with online literacy and digital competence among all marginalized workers in the chosen ASEAN countries impacted by the epidemic, as well as technological disruption, led to a pattern of companies shifting from the formal to the informal sector, with the low skilled being the most affected.

Li et al. (2022) discovered that “gender, grade, gender role, and attitude toward gender-neutral apparel for boys were the most important factors influencing gender equality awareness”. Girls' gender equality awareness was somewhat greater than boys' total gender equality awareness across all areas.

Navriya (2022) pointed out that the empowerment of women is much needed for the social & economics growth of any society. The media may effectively disseminate data in order society to empower women by teaching the public about their position and value. The media plays a crucial role in waking women to their full potential as major movers of social change.

Kaur, M., and Sharma, J. (2023) look at how digital literacy might help promote gender equality in all fields. According to UNICEF, 2017, digital literacy is increasingly regarded as a critical skill for employment and has been linked to greater earning potential and new business prospects. This study discovered several challenges that women experience while using digital technologies. To address this issue, a variety of solutions have been proposed.

Debbarma A and Chinnadurai AS (2023) investigate the transformational effects of digital literacy and ICT on women's empowerment in Tripura. Their research focuses on government and non-government efforts, like as the Digital India program, that promote awareness and access to technology for rural and underprivileged groups.

S & Noronha (2024) argue that combining self-help groups (SHGs) with digital efforts greatly increases women's empowerment by increasing economic autonomy and digital literacy, both of which are critical for attaining broader community growth and gender equality. - It emphasizes the importance of recognizing the intersectional nature of empowerment strategies, arguing that integrating conventional and digital methods not only addresses economic and social issues, but additionally fosters creative community building and provides useful insights for effective policy development and program delivery.

Mishra et al. (2024) examine the convergence of online and financial literacy, with a special emphasis on women's empowerment and Sustainable Development Goals. The author examined the influence of digital literacy, the importance of financial literacy, educational hurdles, and the double literacy technique. The author emphasized the significance of financial and digital literacy in uplifting women and ensuring sustainable development, while also addressing the challenges that must be overcome to achieve these objectives. The findings call for a holistic strategy to literacy that can result in considerable socioeconomic advantages for women worldwide.

According to Mrs. Sowmya B N, et al., (2025), the Indian government's digital literacy activities are critical for promoting socioeconomic inclusion, empowering women to have a sustainable future, and reducing gender inequities in access to digital technology. In addition to achieving gender equality, enabling women in the digital age is an important first step toward long-term economic and social advancement.

Golia S. (2025) examines how academic libraries reduce digital literacy disparities among women students. Findings reveal that the family income is the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.001$), with library access as a

significant secondary predictor ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.001$). The study contributes to human capital and information literacy theory by empirically validating institutional pathways to digital empowerment. Findings align with Sustainable Development Goals 4 (Quality Education) and 5 (Gender Equality), providing evidence-based recommendations for university leaders, librarians, and policymakers.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Objectives

- To examine the perspectives of Working and Non-Working Individuals on the Role of Digital Literacy towards Gender equality

3.2 Hypothesis

- H01:** There is no significant difference in the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards gender awareness.
- H02:** There is no significant difference in the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards social equality.
- H03:** There is no significant difference in the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards educational equality.
- H04:** There is no significant difference in the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards economic equality.
- H05:** There is no significant difference in the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards reward & entitlements.
- H06:** There is no significant difference in the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards gender equality.

3.3 Data Collection

The researcher employed the normative survey method, which seeks to describe and interpret practices and perspectives. The study aimed to explore the role of digital literacy in empowering individuals by enhancing access to education, employment, and social opportunities, with a specific focus on Gautam Buddha Nagar (Noida). The sampling strategy involved selecting 420 educated male and female respondents—both employed and unemployed—from the Gautam Buddha Nagar district. As the study was limited to educated respondents, the sample was drawn from secondary schools and degree colleges within the district. This research utilized five dimensions of gender equality: gender awareness, social equality, educational equality, economic equality, and rewards and entitlements. The researcher used descriptive i.e. percentage, mean, S.D. as well as inferential i.e. 't' test in the present study to treat the data.

4. Analysis & Interpretations

Table 1: perspectives of working and non-working Individuals on the role of digital literacy towards gender awareness

Variable	Work Status	n	Mean	S. D	df	t-value	Result
Gender Awareness	Working	210	36.96	3.93	418	1.000	Not significant
	Non-Working	210	37.35	4.06			

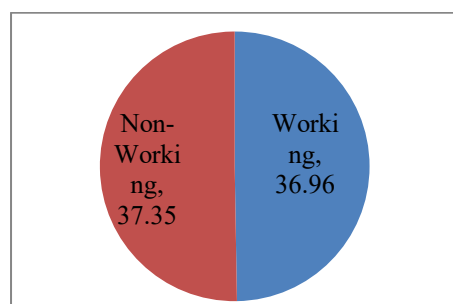


Figure 1: mean value of gender awareness dimension

The table 1 shows the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards gender awareness dimension of gender equality. At df 418, the 't' value is 1.000, which has not been found significant even at 0.05 level of significance. It means that there is no significant difference in the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards gender awareness dimension of gender equality. It may be concluded that the hypothesis that "there is no significant difference in the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards gender awareness dimension of gender equality" is accepted.

Table 2: perspectives of working and non-working Individuals on the role of digital literacy towards social equality

Variable	Work Status	n	Mean	S.D	df	t-value	Result
Social Equality	Working	210	37.21	4.16	418	1.051	Not significant
	Non-Working	210	37.63	4.03			

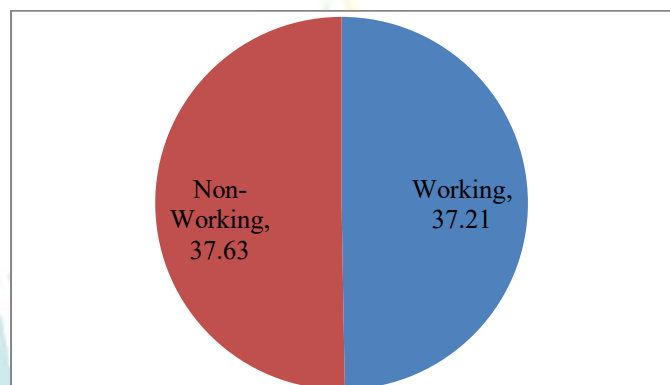


Figure 2: mean value of social equality dimension

The table 2 shows the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards social equality dimension of gender equality. At df 418, the 't' value is 1.051, which is not found significance events at 0.05level of significant. It means that there were no significant differences in perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards social equality dimension of gender equality. It may be concluded that the hypothesis that "there is no significant difference in the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards social equality dimension of gender equality" is accepted.

Table 3: perspectives of working and non-working Individuals on the role of digital literacy towards educational equality

Variable	Work Status	n	Mean	S.D	df	t-value	Result
Educational Equality	Working	210	21.98	3.22	418	0.904	Not significant
	Non-Working	210	22.27	3.35			

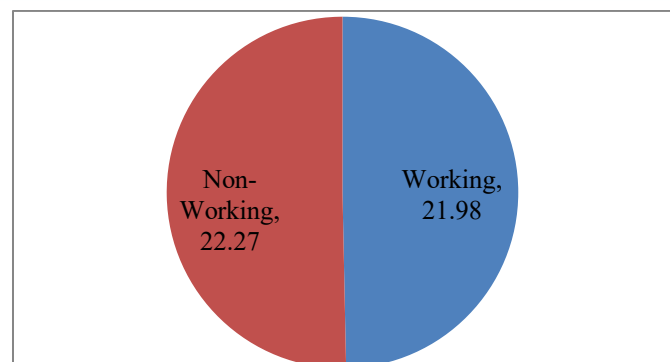


Figure 3: mean value of educational equality dimension

The table 3 shows the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards educational equality dimension of gender equality. At df 418, the 't' value is 0.904, "which has not been found significant even at 0.05 level of significance. It means that there is no significant difference in perspective of working & non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards educational equality dimension of gender equality". It may be concluded that the hypothesis that "there is no significant difference in the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards educational equality dimension of gender equality" is accepted.

Table 4: Perspectives of working and non-working Individuals on the role of digital literacy towards economic equality

Variable	Work Status	n	Mean	S.D	df	t-value	Result
Economic Equality	Working	210	23.45	2.96	418	3.581**	significant
	Non-Working	210	22.38	3.16			

** = Significant at 0.01 Level.

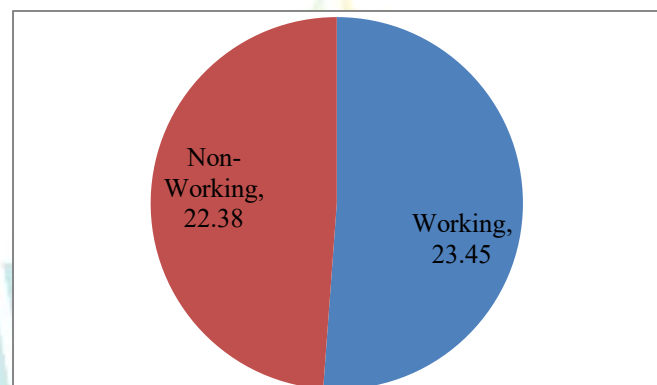


Figure 4: mean value of economic equality dimension

The table 4 shows the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards economic equality dimension of gender equality. At df 418, the 't' value 3.581, which was found "significant at 0.01 level of significance. It means that there is a significant difference in perspective of working and non-working individuals" on the role of digital literacy towards economic equality dimension of gender equality. It is clear from the mean values that working individuals have more positive attitude about the role of digital literacy towards economic equality dimension of gender equality as compared to the non-working individuals. It may be concluded that the hypothesis that "there is no significant difference in the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards economic equality dimension of gender equality" is rejected.

The table 5 shows the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards reward & entitlements dimension of gender equality. At df 418, the 't' value is 4.929, which was not found "significant at 0.01 level of significance. It means that there is a significant difference in perspective of working and non-working individuals" on the role of digital literacy towards reward & entitlements dimension of gender equality. It is clear from the mean values that working individuals have more positive attitude about the role of digital literacy towards reward & entitlements dimension of gender equality as compared to the non-working individuals. It may be concluded that the hypothesis that "there is no significant difference in the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards reward & entitlements dimension of gender equality" is rejected.

Table 5: perspectives of working and non-working Individuals on the role of digital literacy towards rewards and entitlements

Variable	Work Status	n	Mean	S.D	df	t-value	Result
Reward & Entitlements	Working	210	27.84	3.25	418	4.929**	significant
	Non-Working	210	26.25	3.36			

** = Significant at 0.01 Level.

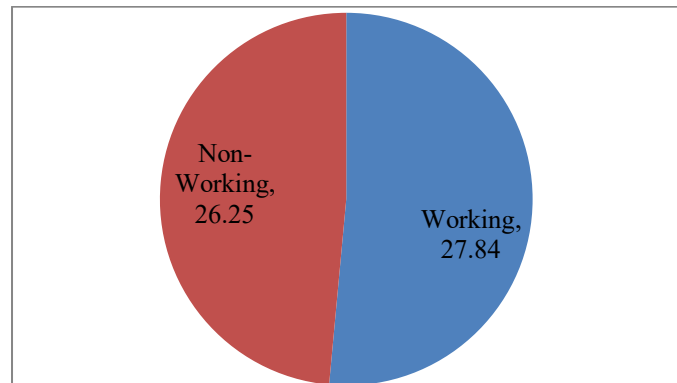


Figure 5: mean value of rewards & entitlements dimension

Table 6: perspectives of working and non-working Individuals on the role of digital literacy towards gender equality

Variable	Work Status	n	Mean	S.D	df	t-value	Result
Gender Equality	Working	210	163.31	8.46	418	2.801	significant
	Non-Working	210	160.96	8.75			

** = Significant at 0.01 Level.

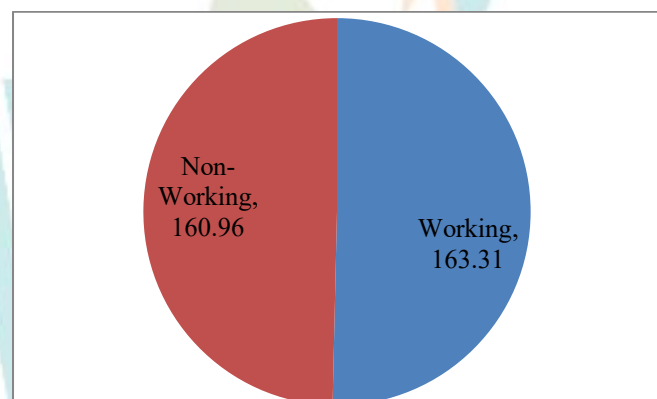


Figure 6: mean value of gender equality

The table 6 shows the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards gender equality. At df 418, the 't' value is 2.801 which was "found significant at 0.01 level of significance. It means that there is a significant difference in the perspective of working and non-working individuals" on the role of digital literacy towards gender equality. It is clear from the mean values that working individuals have more positive attitude about the role of digital literacy towards gender equality as compared to the non-working. It may be concluded that the hypothesis that "there is no significant difference in the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards gender equality" is rejected.

4.1 Findings

- No significant difference has been found in the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards gender awareness dimension of gender equality.
- There has not been found significant difference in the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards social equality dimension of gender equality.
- Significant difference has not been found in the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards educational equality dimension of gender equality.
- A significant difference has been found in the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards economic equality dimension of gender equality.
- A significant difference has been found in the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards reward & entitlements dimension of gender equality.

- There has been found a significant difference in the perspective of working and non-working individuals on the role of digital literacy towards gender equality.

5. Conclusion

The empirical findings reveal nuanced insights into how employment status shapes perceptions of digital literacy's role in advancing gender equality. While both working and non-working individuals share similar viewpoints on how digital tools impact gender awareness, social equality, and educational equality, a clear divide emerges in economic contexts. Working individuals exhibit a significantly more positive attitude toward the role of digital literacy in driving economic equality and fair rewards and entitlements. Ultimately, employed individuals maintain a stronger overall conviction that digital competence is a powerful vehicle for gender parity. By uncovering these distinct perceptual differences, this study provides actionable, context-specific insights that empower policymakers and stakeholders to design targeted digital literacy initiatives that effectively foster comprehensive gender equality.

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