



A Research Study on the Role of Computer Literacy in Rural Areas of Himachal Pradesh

Assistant Prof. Ashwani Sharma

APG Shimla University, H.P-13, India

ABSTRACT:

Modern computer literacy, digital media, internet providing new approaches and access for rural development in the State of Himachal Pradesh in spite of hilly and hard geographical conditions of Himachal Pradesh as different sectors like technologies, expanding education growth, awareness, literacy and socio-economic development are pandering in each areas including rural areas of Himachal Pradesh over the years. But still there is a gap or digital-divide among rural masses of Himachal Pradesh and information technology consumers in the State of Himachal Pradesh than the consumers of the cities and towns of Himachal Pradesh. There is need to provide and impart opportunities for rural masses of Himachal Pradesh to learn these technologies.

Key words: Computer literacy, digital media, internet, information technology, rural areas

INTRODUCTION

Computer literacy has become the cardinal and pivotal part of life in this era of Information Technology. The computer with internet provides informations about anything at anytime throughout the world from any place. In early days, when computer was just introduced or in stage of beginning, masses were interested in keeping their information secret but nowadays they like to share and disseminate information through social media. Today, everything is recorded, evaluated and measured in the terms of database or public data and information. Even though in the age of information technology, the computer is available at various centers of Himachal Pradesh or across India and the world but it is not sufficient in the rural areas of India mostly in hard geographical areas like of Himachal Pradesh as most of the rural masses do not know how to use computer for their leverages in socio-economic and governmental services being provided by the governments time to time. The rural population in India is 70% dwells in rural areas. The percentage of literacy in India is approximately 77.7 % and computer literacy is approximately 38% which is matter of great concern, while percentage of literacy in Himachal Pradesh is 88% and computer literacy is 43.5% in HP rural areas it is 12.1%.

RESEARCH PROBLEM:

The literacy rate of Himachal Pradesh is better than other States of India but the rural areas of Himachal Pradesh are not explored properly on the literacy growth in computer literacy till date as the whole Himachal Pradesh computer literacy was integrated in single platform of researches which were conducted by earlier researches, while the majority of rural population's computer literacy figure is not invested properly. Next, to view and experience the latest scenario of computer literacy in rural areas of Himachal Pradesh is lead notion to know through the current research study.

HYPOTHESIS:

In rural areas of Himachal Pradesh, the role of computer literacy is increasing with the common literacy growth in Himachal Pradesh as rural masses are interdependent on modern information and communication to furnish their social, cultural, economic requirement through digital mode and switching over more computer literacy to follow the demand of the modern time of communication revolution.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The main objective of the present research study is to find out the familiarity of rural masses of Himachal Pradesh with computer literacy including internet, artificial intelligence, digital pedagogy, and web based applications, and investigate the frequency of time regarding use of myriads of sites, apps and to know the purpose and preference of use of various computer services and e-resources to skill in computer literacy.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

In the era of information and technology, computer literacy has become a common phenomenon in everyone's life as it is the demand of the time in each field of life and processing and ameliorates the knowledge of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is the requirement in each work today. Human life has become dependent upon information and communication technology to furnish each work whatever it is study, office work and sending and receiving messages and information to the focused targets. Now each region, geography has been touch and connected via computer network through internet sending receiving audio-video of each working at offices, homes or from anywhere to the target groups, organization, government, sending and receiving any document file, text messages, online or offline study, online payment, online business, online purchasing via computer/personal computer, smart phones and other myriad of communication tools like social media as these all are such web of internet based network which has made the world a village to interact individuals anytime and anywhere. All things have gone digital after the advent of the revolution in information and communication in the world. In India, information and information technology is advancing day by day and no area including rural areas of India are connected with the virtue of this communication advancement. The tough geographical terrains of Himachal Pradesh are connected to information and communication technology and computer literacy is increasing more among the rural masses of Himachal Pradesh equal to the urban masses of Himachal Pradesh, behind this advancement, the literacy growth of Himachal Pradesh is also a greater tool to follow computer literacy and digital/online working. For this, the educational institutes and higher education institutions are major vehicles for generating computer skills among the masses of Himachal Pradesh to sort out each work via computer literacy and rural masses are reliant on it are working through computer literacy to furnish their work in each field of life as digital literacy and computer skills have become a boon for the rural masses of Himachal Pradesh, though, pure computer literacy in rural masses is far away still as they all are not being helped by the modern education system and government so that rural masses can discuss, question, debate, share data, collecting data, organizing and accessing online information in real sense of computer literacy. In Himachal Pradesh mostly in rural areas, computer literacy awareness and use of ICT among mostly in the small group of less literate masses is not so much better but literate groups have much computer literacy equal to urban people of Himachal Pradesh. This computer literacy, skills and computer literacy is due to the increasing role of computer literacy and computer education being imparted in the educational institutions of Himachal Pradesh in rural areas and urban areas. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is the backbone of Indian education system as it is an inevitable tool for sustenance in today's highly competitive environment. The researchers Parasuraman and Riley interpret that present age of technological revolution is being led by digital/computer literacy that has changed the life-style of the masses, communication mode and social relationships and also habits of the masses have changed. Due to computer awareness and its role in automation has affected the whole human lives directly or indirectly and it is driving the work in agriculture, banking, education, medical sciences, manufacturing, social and economic and personal interactions with the masses of the globe. However, this expanding advancement in information technology has rendered myriads of jobs obsolete but it generated new types of jobs and employment as well. As per the research of Leopold that computer and software are customized according to the requirements of the jobs and nature of working but at rural level mostly in developing countries it is less awareness and computer literacy to generate jobs through computer knowledge and software, however, rural masses in Himachal Pradesh operate computer, laptop, smart mobile phones but they are still away from job creation through the computer literacy as for this purpose digital skills are required and awareness also. This is also on account of digital-divide in India as computer literacy is not equally being imparted to the poor and rural masses at all level. This is why a rural computer literate section is not switching over digital world more strongly to gain the benefits in proper way. Secondly, at rural level internet access is weaker and lack of social network support is also weak and also there is lack of internet use for redresses the problems of the masses. A researcher Gordon in 2018 says that Internet penetration in urban India is at sixty four percent while twenty percent in rural India, in the same sense, the percentage of literacy in India is approximately 77.7 % and computer literacy is approximately 38% which is matter of great concern, while percentage of literacy in Himachal Pradesh is 88% and computer literacy is 43.5% in HP rural areas it is 12.1%. Behind this, there is a big digital divide as rural masses face problems and they have weak resources to use the computer in the right directions. A researcher Gairola described in his study that there in rural areas high-speed internet is limited to cities and towns, however, government of India and State government of Himachal Pradesh have implemented many flagship services or projects like Bharat Net Project but people have no commercial broadband connections. The computer literacy and awareness can play a major role but availability of digital resources does not ensure access to the internet mostly in rural areas of India and also Himachal Pradesh, and most of government schools at rural areas are not equipped with the facilities of computers and internet connections as per the other studies only 12.1% rural people have access to computers in both schools and village level.

RESEARCH METHODOY:

For present research study, a survey has been conducted used the tool of questionnaire. A total of one hundred sixty samples have been taken from three villages and rural people dwelling in these villages having their Arts, Science and Commerce stream.

(a) Research Design:

For present research study design, conducted survey on the rural areas of Himachal Pradesh in which three villages from Shimla District, Mandi District and Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh have been taken to know the role of computer literacy in rural areas of himachal Pradesh as these populated villages depict the status of computer literacy in the whole areas of Himachal Pradesh. For this study, the media reports on computer facilities, internet facilities in the rural areas have been studied.

(b) Population and Sample:

For population and sampling of the present research study, the age groups 16 to 45 of male & females of rural areas from three villages of big districts of Himachal Pradesh roped in the research study to observe and know the role of computer literacy status in the rural areas of Himachal Pradesh. From these three villages with population of three thousand of the age group of 16 to 45 is taken 160 people under research survey.

(c) Tools and Techniques:

For present research study, various tools and techniques have been applied like questionnaire, interviews, and various media reports and studied on educational institutions in the rural areas regarding computer education.

(d) Primary Research and Secondary Research Data:

For Primary Research Data Collection, interview method, interviews, survey method have been applied, and for Secondary Research Data Collection, media reports on rural development, schools in rural areas, usage of media, mobile phones, online/digital status of rural people, rural people's sense and awareness on operating computer for socio-economic and political use and official working through computer/online and other uses of computer literacy for make life easy to sort out people's requirements from home, etc.

(e) Analysis of Data:

After collecting research data, the comparative analysis has been inducted in the research to know the real role of computer literacy in rural areas of Himachal Pradesh.

(f) Testing of Variables:

For testing and analysis the research collected data, independent variables and dependent variables have been tested which prove the role of computer literacy in rural areas of Himachal Pradesh and other dearth of computer literacy.

(g) Validity:

Earlier, the research study in the context of role of computer literacy in rural areas of Himachal Pradesh was conducted under smoothly including cities and towns of Himachal Pradesh but exact data of role of computer literacy in rural areas of Himachal Pradesh could not appear in front of the policy makers. However, the role of computer literacy increased in rural areas of Himachal Pradesh after a few years with the growing rate common literacy in Himachal Pradesh. Role of computer literacy in fact changes life-style of all but in rural areas there is digital divide as there is still dearth of computer based information and communication technology and internet conveniences in contrast to urban areas of Himachal and other States of India.

(h) Reliability:

After testing the research data and re-test-data, it is found that role of computer literacy influences the psychology, perceptions of humans, life-style, communication way, behaviour and change in working in each field of life and humans are adopting the new information technology to meet their problems.

RESULTS/FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

The results of the present research study showed that majority of rural masses of Himachal Pradesh use computer for one to four hours a day to explore online information and have skills in computer to furnish every work from study to official working and online business. The findings indicate that 85% of rural respondents of Himachal Pradesh have learnt Information and Communication Technology, computer applications and use of Internet for online or digital leverages to get in social, political, economic fields and use of computer for employment.

The study found that male and female graduates from rural background are more innovative in computer applications and they use computer, smart mobile phones for their online study, apply for jobs online and help the household people in online way to payment, billing, e-application, e-form of the government to solve the problem in easy way through digital mode but in rural areas internet facilities, BiFI connections are not available in speedy way, and poor rural people have no access to the communication devices like computer, smart phones, laptop and unable to recharge smart phones for big data to use for sort out their required working through online way, however, poor people in rural areas have mobile phones but their access to smart communication is at zero level neither they cannot afford special amount on smart communications and education in computer as well. The rural youths are so smart that they are savvy of computer applications, social media, using different apps for solve the problems through online way and experiencing everything online like e-application, e-business, e-purchasing of required things as youths are more aware and also getting basic education on computer at rural based schools and colleges but due to digital divide and lack of internet facilities they face problems. Those are the rural youths who teach their elders and parents from the traditional background of communication on the importance of computer literacy in modern human life to make each working in life easy, speedy and transparent. For blind/disabled persons in rural areas even urban areas, there is no education in proper way and technology under the holistic schemes of 'Samagra Shiksha' of Government of India providing education to children with special needs. Due to the shortage and digital divide, many rural youths cannot get the leverages of social, economic schemes of the government through online/digital way so they have to switch or move to the towns to know the governmental schemes like employment opportunities, start-up schemes and get the benefits of key reforms in higher education.

CONCLUSION:

The present study concluded that majority of the rural masses of Himachal Pradesh use computer, work through digital mode, online study, read e-newspapers, use social media, online business/online purchasing, use e-applications, use Google payment, e-payment of electricity payment and e-bank transaction and apply for job through online mode and involve in online study and playing games for chatting purpose, accessing social sites, accessing study material, accessing audio-videos for boost knowledge, sending and receiving messages, access employment opportunities provided on social sites and government sites.

SUGGESTIONS:

Computer/Digital literacy literate masses find meaning in digital information and make use of it as they exhibit the characteristics of social, cultural, economic, political and educational understanding, collaboration, the ability of all people from both rural and urban background to find and opt

information, effective communication, better education, healthy communication, use of information technology for healthy human life, functional skills, creativity and critical thinking. However, in this context, the rural areas of Himachal Pradesh is advancing in computer literacy in comparison to other rural areas of India but due to the hard geography of Himachal Pradesh, government and private communication companies, Tele-communication companies could not provide speedy Internet connections to the rural people, and poor people are still deprived of big facilities of communication devices like computer, laptop and smart mobile phones. So government of Himachal Pradesh and Government of India should eradicate digital-divide and impart equal internet facilities and communication devices to backward rural people mostly to the poor youths.

REFERENCES:

- [1] ASER (2018). Annual status of education report (Rural) 2018, provisional, ASER Centre New Delhi
- [2] Bhaskar, Natasha Jha, (2020), Global synergy in higher education, www.publicationsdivision.nic.in
- [3] Chiemeke C.C. (2018). Bridging the digital divide in developing countries: a case study of Bangladesh and Kuwait, Emerging digital spaces in contemporary society, Palgrave Macmillan, London
- [4] Dwivedi, Yogesh K, Misra Santosh K & Hughes Laurie, (Yojna Monthly Magazine) (Feb., 2020). Artificial intelligence: challenges and opportunities for India, www.publicationsdivision.nic.in
- [5] Gairola, M. (2018). In digital India, The Wire
- [6] Gordon, K. (2018). Internet usage in India, <https://www.statista.com/internet-usage-in-india/>
- [7] Gangotia, A. (2013). Home stay scheme in Himachal Pradesh: A successful story of community based tourism initiatives, Global Research Analysis (Vol.2, Issue2), www.publicationsdivision.nic.in
- [8] Hole, Hole (2019). In-theWall-Beginnings, <http://www.hole-in-the-wall.com/Beginnings.html>.
- [9] Higher education: Online entrance, digital admission and new layers of hurdle for marginalized students (2019), Education
- [10] Lankshear, C. (1993). Functional literacy from a Freirean point of view, New York, Routledge
- [11] Law, N.W.Y., Woo, D.J., de la Torre, J, & Wrong, K.W.G. (2018). A global framework of reference on digital literacy skills for indicator
- [12] Leopol, T.A., V. Ratcheva, V.;Z. Saddia, Z. (2018). The future of jobs, Edited by World Economic Forum
- [13] Parasuraman, R.,& V. Riley, V. (1997). Humans and automation: use, misuse, disuse, Abuse, Human Factor, <https://doi.org/10.1080/001401397380108>.
- [14] Prasad, Dr. KD, (Feb, 2020). Open & Distance Learning: a futuristic approach, www.publicationsdivision.nic.in
- [15] Thakur, Pyar Singh (2020), Padhe Bharat Online: a advantage and disadvantage, (Education magazine-eduvoice), eduvoice.in
- [16] Thakur, Assist. Prof. Pyar Singh (2021) . The repercussion of new media on inter-cultural communication in global context, (2021). (International Journal of Research Publication and Review), ijrpr.com
- [17] Yojana, (A Development Monthly Magazine). Edition: on Innovation in Education, (Feb., 2020), (Volume-64), www.publicationsdivision.nic.in
- [18] Yojana Team, (magazine) (Feb.2020). Key initiatives in education, www.publicationsdivision.nic.in
- [19] Yojana Team, (YOjana Monthly Magazine), (Feb., 2020). Quality education for weaker section and disadvantaged groups, www.publicationsdivision.nic.in