International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Role of Rural Youth in Promoting Digital Literacy

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ABSTRACT

In the last two decades, India has seen a new dawn with the help of computers and technologies. Digital technology is becoming an increasingly critical tool in providing students and educators with a personalized learning experience that takes advantage of resources and opportunities both inside and outside the college building. Youth are always incredibly passionate when it comes to using new technology. Their day-to-day engagement seems natural and effortless, leading many to believe that youth are experts in all things digital; that they embody the term "digital literacy." Digital literacy not only includes being a proficient user of technology but also having an understanding of how it works and skills to create new technology. Youth are not only being expert users of latest technology, but also understand its inner workings and having the skills to develop new technology to meet their unique needs. The purpose of this paper is to understand the use of new technology by the rural youth and their role in promoting digital literacy in the society to accelerate, enhance and simplify everyday tasks. In this paper, an empirical study is conducted to examine how rural youth have taken the initiative in order to provide awareness among the people to use of different types of digital technologies. With an accurate understanding of what digital literacy is, and why it matters, present youth can collectively support greater accessibility to computers and digital experiences.

Key word: Digital, Literacy, Rural, Youth, Technology

INTRODUCTION

Digital Literacy has led to great increases in information that can be expediently and quickly accessed and facilitates the collaboration and sharing of computer knowledge. Considering various forms of digital literacy, it is observed that there is an growth of digital modes of communication in the current generation. There are significant changes in electronic campaigns to the development of computer mediated democracy, digital technologies have greatly influenced the ways in which people interact with their families, friends, communities, and even with governments. However, advances in digital technologies have also changed the required skills for communicating and gathering information.

Digital literacy is the combination of the two terms – Digital and Literacy. Digital means, a symbolic representation of data in binary format, and literacy refers to the ability to be ready for knowledge, write coherently, and think critically about the written world.

Digital Information is becoming essential to almost every aspect of modern life which means that there is a need as never before, for learners and teachers who are information literate in a digital context. User community require digital information literacy, and skill to use computers and the Internet for many aspects of academic, research and other social activities which equips them with digital information capability in a knowledge based society. Digital literacy is the ability to locate, organize, understand, evaluate, and analyze information using digital technology. It involves a working knowledge of current technology, and an understanding of how it can be used. Digitally literate people can communicate and work more efficiently, especially with those who possess the same knowledge and skills.

There is a general feeling among everyone, that young people are successfully learning how to use technology and do better than elderly people in increasing their digital literacy. Youth are socially driven and want to be online to interact with peers. At the same time, they need to be trained and motivate about their role in promoting the digital literacy and how effectively they can educate the society.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

This is the era of computer technology and it is very essential to know about the usage of computer and other related devices by every individual. Digital India is an initiative taken by the present Government of India to integrate the government departments and connect the people of India directly with all the departments to address the issues in a better way. It aims at ensuring that the government services are made available to citizens electronically by reducing paperwork and connect rural area citizens. In order to make best use of these technologies, one has to educate the users to use them. The rural youth plays an important role in promoting digital literacy to the society. In spite of successful promotion of digital literacy successfully by the rural

youth some of the issues involved are like lack of knowledge, less access to latest technology due to financial and social constraints and time constraints due to competitive student environment.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1) To understand if the rural youth are interested in learning new technology.

2) To study the digital literacy initiatives taken and to find out whether the rural youth are capable to promote digital literacy though the use of technology/tools.

3) To know the modes of the digital literacy promoted by the youth

DATA COLLECTION

Primary data is to the data assembled for a definite purpose or for a specific research. These data gives up-to-date information. This sort of data is gained from original sources. In this study, primary statistics is collected from the rural students in an around rural colleges of Dakshina Kannada district using a designed form of questionnaire. Secondary data was collected through review of both empirical and theoretical studies from books, journals, dissertations, magazines and internet.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

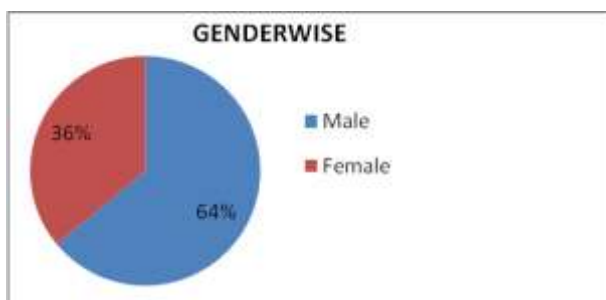This section consists of chart related to our study.
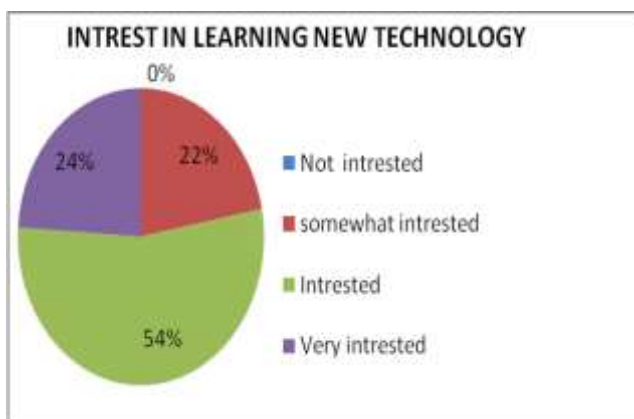

Fig. 1: Gender wise respondents

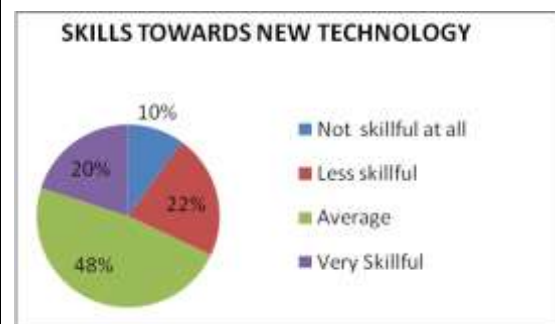Fig. 2: Respondents interest in learning new technology

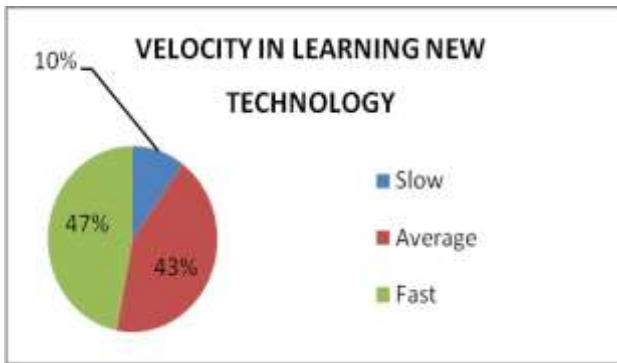Fig. 3: Respondents skill towards new technology

Fig. 4: Respondents learning speed in the usage of new technology/ software/ application
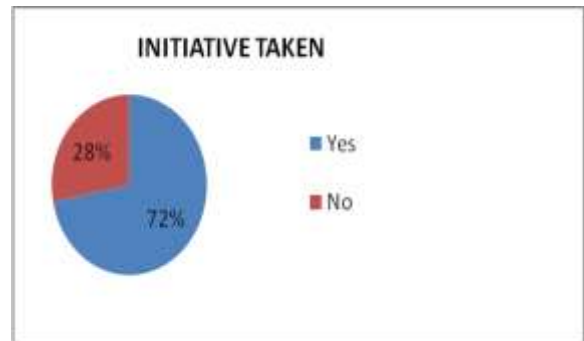

Fig. 5: Initiative taken by the respondents towards digital literacy
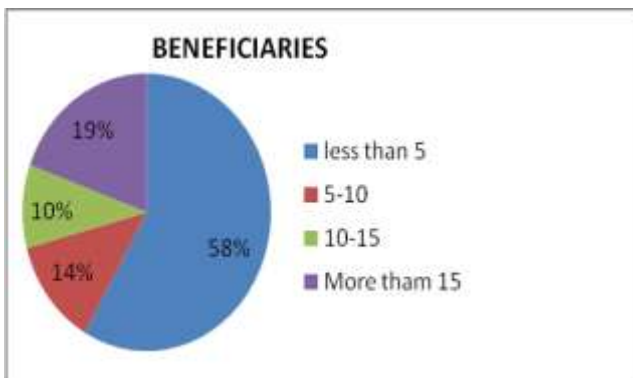

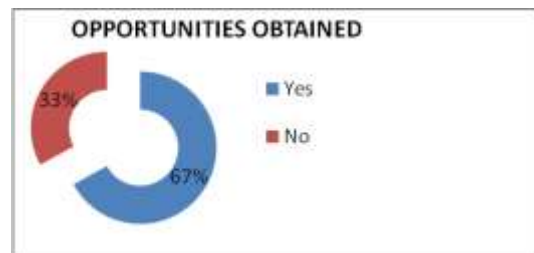Fig. 6: Beneficiary from the respondent

Fig. 7: Promotion of digital literacy gave more opportunities to interact with people.
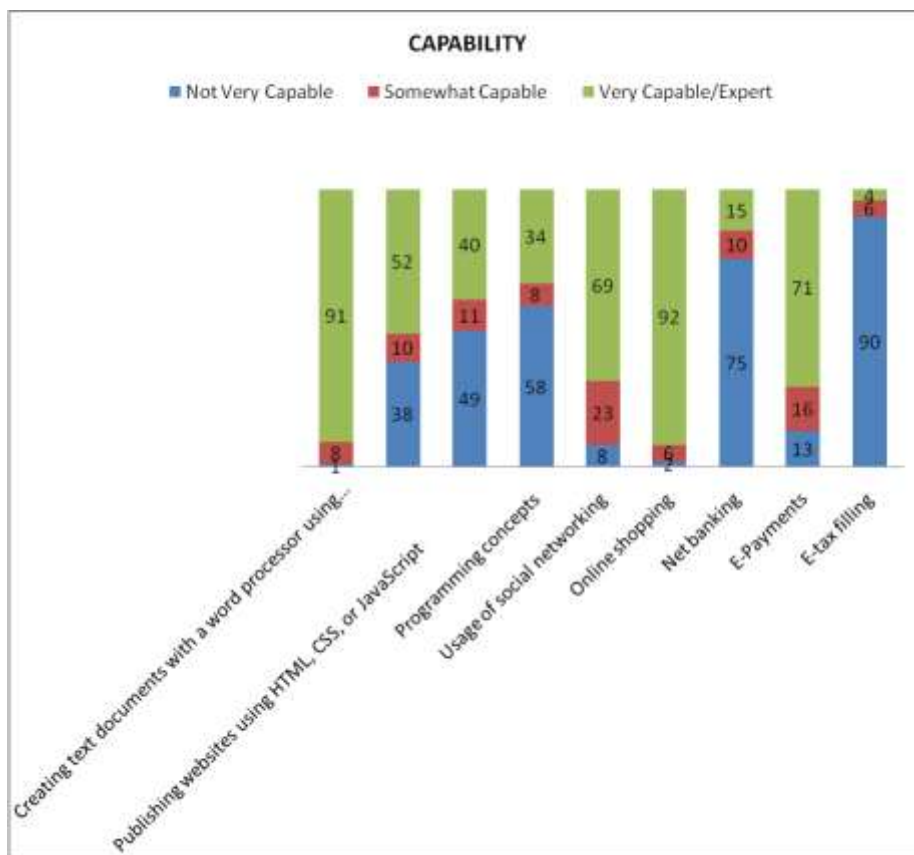

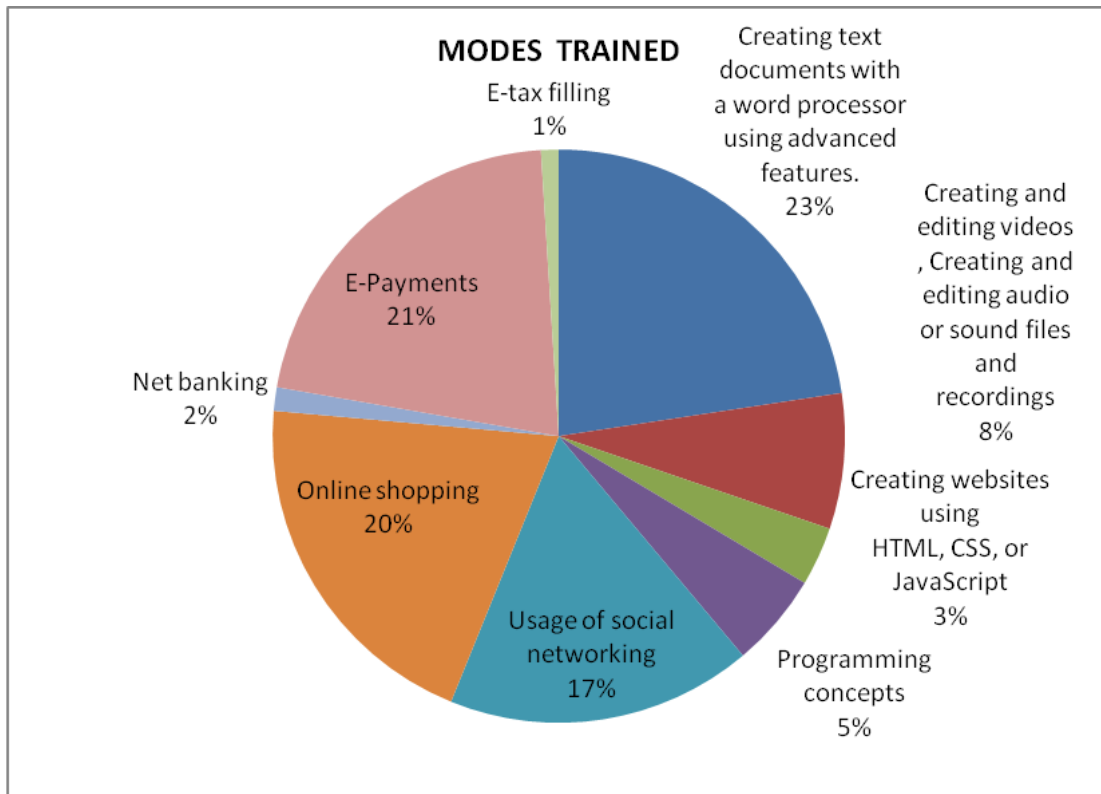Fig. 8: Capability of the youth in learning various tools

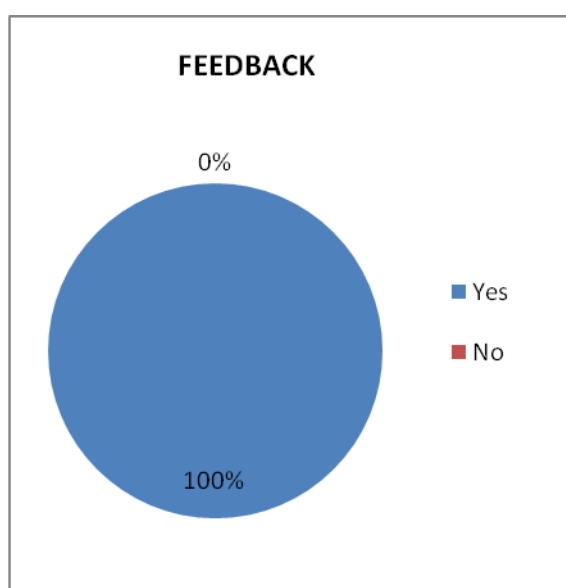Fig. 9: Modes digital literacy promoted by the respondents
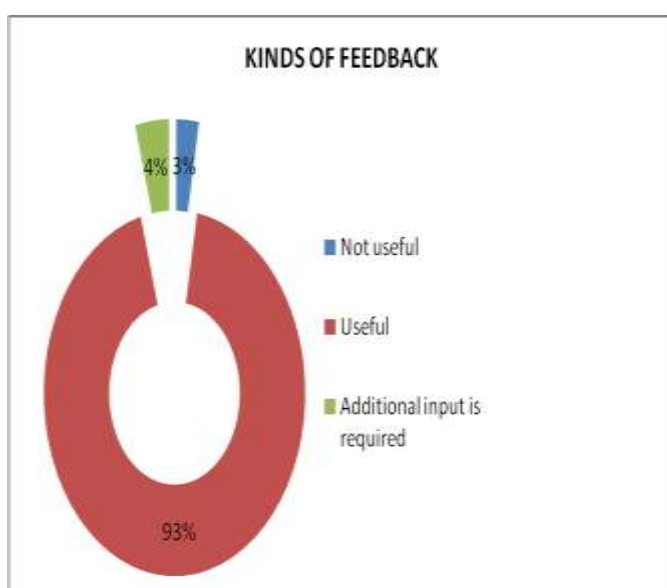

Fig 10: Feedback from the beneficiaries

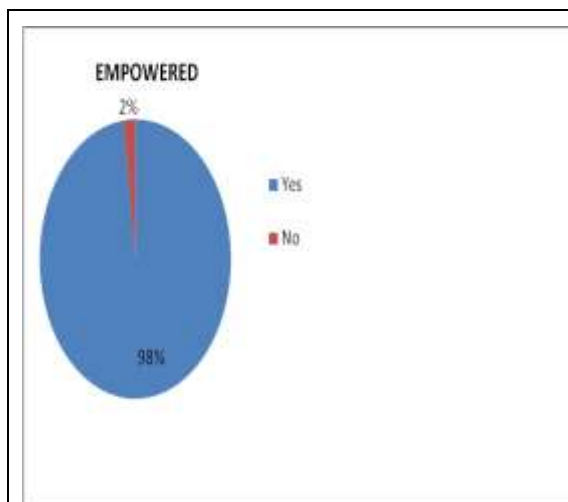Fig 11: Kinds of feedback is received

Fig 12: Promotion of digital literacy empowered the youth

Fig 13: Registered for `Vittiya Saksharta Abhiyan' of MHRD

RESULTS

○ Majority of the respondents are male.

○ The study shows that 54 percent are interested and 24 percent are very much interested in learning new technology.

○ The study found that 48 percent are average and 22 percent are less skill full towards new technology.

○ From the study, it is found that 47 percent are fast in the use of new technology, software or any applications.

○ From the study, it is found that 72 percent of the respondents have taken initiative and 28 percent have not taken initiative towards promotion of digital literacy

○ The study shows that the majority respondents have promoted digital literacy to less than 5 people.

○ The study shows majority of the respondents agree that promotion of digital literacy gave them opportunities to interact with people.

○ The study shows majority of the youth are capable to create or share document in order to promote digital literacy.

○ The study shows that majority of the digital modes promoted by the youth are word processor, online shopping website and e-payment.

○ The study shows all the respondent receive feedback from the people

○ The study shows majority the feedback gives by the people is useful towards promotion of digital literacy.

○ The study shows, majority of respondent are registered for 'Vittiya Saksharta Abhiyan' of MHRD.

○ The study shows majority of respondent expressed promotion of digital literacy has empowered them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

● Awareness about the promotion of digital literacy should be given to the rural student so that they gain knowledge about the different tools of digitalization and they can educate others about the new technologies and develop various skills through online courses.

● Colleges can organize workshops in association with NGOs to train the rural student about new technology and their benefits.

● Rural student should be motivated by the faculties so that they can take initiative in promoting the digital literacy and register their name for `Vittiya Saksharta Abhiyan' of MHRD**.**

● Wide range of extension activities could be organized by rural students in association to promote digital literacy specially in the rural area.

● Allow rural students to maintain blogs, wikis, web pages related to their learning.

● Utilize storytelling media to allow rural students to create and publish stories.

- Government should take more initiatives for encouraging the rural youth in promoting digital literacy by providing certain incentives/prizes/award.

CONCLUSION

There are no boundaries and borders in the digital age. The promotion of digital literacy will surely enhance the nine pillars of Digital India programme: broadband highway, universal access, public Internet access, e-Governance, e-Kranti, information for all, electronics manufacturing, IT for jobs and early harvest program. Rural youth are taking a major part in helping the country grow digitally. The modern youth are guiding others and create awareness about the digitalization. Academic institutions should take initiative to educate and motivate the youth in spreading the digital awareness to the society.

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