

## **2. Digital Literacy among Research Scholars - A Comparative Study**

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### **Abstract**

*Communication through technology requires a lot of skills. It is not simply as we are communicating in our day to day matters. To be a digital literate individual is the need of the hour today. Everyone should know how to be equipped with digital literacy skills. This paper explains the concept of digital literacy, the awareness level of digital literacy having researchers. The study adopted survey method and sample is 50 research scholars doing research in various departments in universities in Hyderabad. Percentage analysis was done to obtain the results. The findings of the throw light upon the level of digital literacy skills of research scholars by looking into their use and awareness of digital technology. It is suggested that the skills of digital literacy have to be inculcated among research scholars. The ways through which these skills can be inculcated is also put forward*

**Keywords:** *Digital Literacy, Awareness, Technology, Skills*

### **Introduction**

Media and telecommunications are increasingly strong dimensions in youth culture regardless of the extent to which youth learn to work with technology. With the increased use of digital technologies in research purposes, the need to become a digital literate individual is necessary especially for a researcher. The use of technological skills to its maximum leads to many unknown errors and problems. The knowledge about these skills is not enough to become a digital literate person. It is essential to know what digital literacy is, the level of digital literacy once have and what are the digital literacy skills.

### **Digital Literacy**

Digital Literacy is the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information (Son, 2015). It requires requiring both cognitive and technical skills. A

digitally literate person possesses a variety of skills to understand and communicate digital information in a variety of formats, able to utilize effectively the diverse technologies present before him/her, can able to retrieve relevant information, interpret the results among them. They can also judge the quality of information received. The relationship between lifelong learning and personal privacy is well understood by a digitally literate person. Appropriate utilization of these technologies to communicate and collaborate with others is a hallmark of a digitally literate person. They can also use these skills to contribute to the society vibrantly.

### **Need and significance of the study**

According to Ferrari (2012), digital literacy is the ability to understand media, to search and being critical about information retrieved through the internet. It is also the ability to communicate with others through a variety of digital tools and applications. It is not simply the use of media or downloading the information using technology. But it is more than that. How we share this information with others also is part of digital literacy. It is the multiplicity of literacy associated with the use of digital technologies (Ng, 2012). The use of software and hardware technologies used by individuals comes under this digital technology. The communication channels needed skills to effectively manage, interpret and create meaning (Dudeney, 2013). The elements of digital literacy are cultural, cognitive, constructive, communicative, confident, creative, critical and civic (Belshaw, 2014). According to Chan (2017), it is necessary to develop digital literacy skills with which students can communicate and express their ideas effectively using digital media.

As we know that educational sectors around the world are in the process to incorporate digital literacy into the curriculum for the betterment of the students. How far our researchers possess this awareness to effectively utilize technology retrieved knowledge is of much importance. Thus the investigator felt a need to study the digital literacy awareness level of research scholars.

A research study showed that gender plays a large role in the digital literacy of graduate and professional students compared to other demographic factors (Owens, 2017). So a gender-wise analysis was also made an objective of the study.

### **Statement of the problem**

The problem of the study is stated as “**Awareness of Digital Literacy among Research Scholars in Hyderabad- A Comparative Study**”

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To find out the awareness level of digital literacy among research scholars in Hyderabad
2. To find out the difference in the awareness level of digital literacy between male and female research scholars of various department in Hyderabad

### **Hypotheses of the study**

1. The awareness level of digital literacy among research scholars in Hyderabad will be high
2. The awareness level of digital literacy between male and female research scholars of various departments in Hyderabad will be different

### **Methodology**

- Method

Descriptive survey method was used for the present study.

- Sampling

The sample was selected using random sampling method

- Sample

50 research scholars from various departments of universities in Hyderabad. It consists of 25 male and 25 female research scholars.

- Tool

The tool used for this study is Digital Literacy Awareness Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of 20 questions. The first part of the questionnaire was about the preliminary information about the participant and the second part consist questions to know the digital literacy awareness.

- Statistical analysis

Percentage analysis was done to find out the level of awareness.

### **Analysis**

Based on the data collected percentage analysis was done to find out the awareness level of research scholars. The awareness on digital literacy is represented in Table 1.

**Table1**  
**Awareness on digital literacy**

| Question   | Answer                               | Percentage |
|--|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Device needed for video conferencing                           | Web cam                              | 64         |
| Digital cameras store pictures                                 | Memory card                          | 72         |
| AVI & MP4  | Digital video format                 | 43         |
| Photo sharing site   | Picasa                               | 46         |
| Process of converting spoken words into text                   | Speech recognition                   | 32         |
| Bluetooth  | Short range wireless interconnection | 78         |
| Spreadsheet application  | MS Excel                             | 82         |
| Evaluation of information provided on websites does not needed | Currency                             | 72         |
| Term for junk emails   | Spam                                 | 79         |
| Social networking site   | Facebook                             | 93         |
| Fraudulent attempt to acquire information                      | Phishing                             | 52         |
| Not a safe password practice                                   | Simple to guess                      | 60         |
| Trojan   | Virus                                | 71         |
| Process of confirming username and password                    | Authentication                       | 34         |

From the result it is seen that the least awareness percentage for the question no: 5 and maximum awareness is for the question no: 10. The awareness on digital literacy is average among research scholars according to the study.

The percentages of awareness among male and female research scholars were also found to see the gender wise difference. The result is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
**Awareness on digital literacy of male and female scholars**

| Question   | Answer                               | Female | Male |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------|------|
| Device needed for video conferencing                           | Webcam                               | 35     | 29   |
| Digital cameras store pictures                                 | Memory card                          | 36     | 36   |
| AVI & MP4  | Digital video format                 | 21     | 22   |
| Photo sharing site   | Picasa                               | 20     | 26   |
| Process of converting spoken words into text                   | Speech recognition                   | 14     | 18   |
| Bluetooth  | Short range wireless interconnection | 36     | 42   |
| Spreadsheet application  | MS Excel                             | 48     | 34   |
| Evaluation of information provided on websites does not needed | Currency                             | 32     | 40   |
| Term for junk emails   | Spam                                 | 43     | 36   |
| Social networking site   | Facebook                             | 46     | 47   |
| Fraudulent attempt to acquire                                  | Phishing                             | 24     | 28   |

|   |                 |    |    |
|---|-----------------|----|----|
| information                                 |                 |    |    |
| Not a safe password practice                | Simple to guess | 31 | 29 |
| Trojan                                      | Virus           | 35 | 36 |
| Process of confirming username and password | Authentication  | 14 | 20 |

From the result it is seen that the percentage of awareness on digital literacy is high for female research scholars in four questions and in nine questions the male counterparts scores the maximum. In one question both female and male scores the same.

### Findings

The study clearly shows that the digital literacy awareness level is only average among research scholars. The reason for this may be the utilization of technology is less or the exposure to the digital world is not enough to get the desired result. As growing researchers, the awareness on digital literacy must be high since the technology-based information add more value and outreach to their research. It is also seen that the male counterparts score high on the questionnaire. The exposure to the outside world with the technology is utilising more by the male scholars than the female scholars. It has to be noted that the situation is not the same for all the questions. But yet female scholars must focus on this point to enhance their level of awareness.

### Suggestions

To interact with the digital world around them knowing how to make use of technology is required. From the classroom itself, children can learn these skills. Exposing children to the digital world definitely enhance their interest and skills essential to use technology (Hobbs, 2017). By using blogs, emails, podcasts, digital portfolios, websites and other technologies in the classroom will make the students aware of the technologies and they will also start to use them (Sharp, 2017). Applying new knowledge gained from the internet requires skill which leads them to think creatively and also make them work collaboratively to evaluate the information downloaded. Hence as a researcher it is very important to adhere to the digital world to collect the research data occurring all over the world pertaining to the specific field of research.

## Conclusion

Developing technical skill is crucial for today's generation since it makes them employable. But it does not mean that an individual must be an information technology skilled person. To know how to make effective use of this technology for knowledge acquisition, information and communication are essential. For this digital literacy is essential. It makes a person social engaged too. So finding more ways to develop digital literacy skills is the responsibility of everybody.

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