

## DIGITAL LITRECY AND UPSKILLING

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### Abstract:

*In today's world, characterized by rapid technological advancements, digital literacy and skill development have become crucial for individuals to develop well. Digital literacy and upskilling represent the multifaceted nature of digital literacy, encompassing technical skills, critical thinking, information evaluation, and responsible online behaviour. It then examines the importance of skill development in India, adapting to the evolving digital landscape and securing employment opportunities. The rapid evolution of technological proficiency is no longer optional but a fundamental requirement. The rapid evolution of technologies like AI automation and big data is driving a global demand for workforce transformation, with studies estimating that 50% of employees will need to reskill by 2026. The paper further discusses the challenges and opportunities related to promoting digital literacy and skill development across diverse demographics and populations. Finally, it proposes potential solutions and strategies to bridge the digital divide and empower individuals to become active and informed participants in the digital age.*

**Keywords:** Digital Literacy, Artificial Intelligence, Digital Upskilling, Workforce Development, Reskilling Strategies, Developing Economies, Government Schemes and digital India.

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### Introduction:

Literacy traditionally refers to the ability to read and write, enabling individuals to Understand and communicate through written language. It is a fundamental skill that allows People to process information, express ideas, and engage in society effectively, Digital literacy refers to the ability to effectively and critically navigate, evaluate, and Create information using a range of digital technologies. It is not only about technical skills, but also learning to utilize digital media for communication, problem-solving, and accessing and generating knowledge. And the skill formation is developing acquiring Capabilities of individuals and knowledge to meet the needs of different industries for Employ-ability and economic development. Skill development in India is a top agenda for India, Through programs such as Skill India and Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), to Serve the needs between the education system and industry. Programs focus on preparing the Workforce with generic skills, in line with the nation's vision for sustainable growth and Competitiveness globally. Skill India Digital (SID) is a milestone in India's progress. Skilling and employment ecosystem by using the India Stack Global platform to provide secure, saleable, and inclusive solutions. SID incorporates AI/ML-based systems to provide personal career paths, skill courses, and jobs, while its digital exchange for jobs links job seekers to employers in the domestic and foreign countries. The platform provides digitally verifiable credentials using Aadhaar-based

authentication and enables convergence by bringing together a range of such government initiatives like eShram, DigiLocker, and AgriStack, improving access to skilling, credit, and markets. SID also presents the Digital Skill Card as a transferable QR-based credential enabling lifelong learning using interactive digital objects and AR/VR/XR applications. By aggregating demand, connecting stakeholders, and promoting entrepreneurship, SID aims to transform workforce through skilling, reskilling, and upskilling, aligning with the vision of inclusive economic growth of India India Skills 2023-24, organized by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), is a significant event in vocational training. landscape of India, with participation from lakhs of aspirants nationwide. The competition aims to elevate training standards to global benchmarks, fostering industry collaboration and ensuring participants develop internationally relevant skills. Conducted in multiple stages from district to national levels, it culminates with top performers representing India at the 2024 World Skills Competition in Lyon, France. This initiative not only showcases emerging talent but also motivates skill development across all sectors. By fostering global competitiveness, India Skills supports the vision of nation to becoming a leader in skilled labour. Digital literacy and skill development are essential for fostering inclusive economic growth and ensuring global competitiveness, particularly in a rapidly digitizing world. As nations worldwide embrace the transformative potential of digital technologies, the need for a digitally literate and skilled workforce has become more pronounced. In India, the emergence of the digital economy has significantly influenced the socio-economic landscape, offering unprecedented opportunities in education, healthcare, governance, and commerce. However, the realization of this potential hinges on equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to thrive in digital environments. Initiatives like the Digital India movement, Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA), and the Skill India mission have been prime drivers in spreading digital literacy in rural and urban India. The movements are meant to increase awareness about digitalism, generate employable skills, and integrate marginalized sections of society into mainstream economic streams. The primary objective of this study is to assess the trends in digital literacy and skill development in India over the past five years and to evaluate the effectiveness of government initiatives in addressing digital skill gaps.

#### **Government Investment in Skill Development:**

The Government of India has invested in the field of skill development through various means, including Skill development schemes. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has multiple schemes, including:

- i) Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY): A scheme offering short-term and long-term courses.
- ii) National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS): A scheme offering monetary incentives for apprenticeship.
- iii) Pradhan Mantri Yuva Yojana (PM-YUVA): Scheme for the purpose of educating and empowering prospective entrepreneurs.

#### **Union Budget 2024-25**

The Union Budget 2024-25 introduced a new program for the skilling of 20 lakh youth Within a span of five

years. It also modified the Model Skill Loan Scheme to avail of up to ₹7.5 lakh loans for 25,000 students per annum.

#### **Union Budget 2025-26**

The government has allocated 500 crore to establish five National centre of Excellences. Atal Tinkering Labs(ATLs): To faster STEM education and digital literacy at the grassroots level, 50,000 additional Atal Tinkering Labs are to be established in schools.

PM Research Fellowship: 10,000 new fellowships are introduced to promote research in cutting-edge technologies, with a specific focus on AI and deep tech.

#### **Union Budget 2026-27**

Massive Allocation for Skills: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship received a 62% increase in allocation, rising to ₹9,885.80 crore, indicating a major commitment to workforce development.

AI-Enabled Learning: A Centre of Excellence for Artificial Intelligence in Education is to be established to advance digital pedagogy and personalized learning.

AVGC Content Creator Labs: To foster digital creativity, the budget announces the establishment of Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, and Comics (AVGC) labs in 15,000 secondary schools and 500 colleges.

Focus on Emerging Tech: The budget emphasizes training in emerging technologies, including AI, machine learning, and data analytics.

Digital Literacy for Inclusivity: The "Divyangjan Kaushal Yojana" is introduced to provide specialized skill training in IT services and AVGC, aimed at promoting financial independence for persons with disabilities.

Digital Agriculture: The "Bharat-VISTAAR" platform is launched to integrate agri-stack and provide AI-powered tools for farmers.

**Collaborations:** MSDE also collaborates with state governments, industry, international organizations, and NGOs to roll out skill development programs. Investment in skill development is solicited from the government for the reason of providing a skilled workforce capable of fulfilling the Demand of the domestic as well as international markets.

**Methodology:** This study follows the quantitative as well as qualitative methods, employing secondary data collected from the reports of the government and surveys. Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) Annual Report 2024. Data drawn from all these are put together to draw inferences, patterns, and trends regarding digital literacy, labour force participation, and training programme in India. Regional disparities in digital literacy levels and skill development levels are also explored through the study. Therefore, the current research aiming to add value to sustainable development discourse through digital empowerment.

#### **Summary of Findings:**

i) **Digital Literacy Trends:** The trend of digital literacy has been increasing sharply in India, from 20.5 per cent in 2019 to 46.3 per cent in 2023. Policy and technology have been driving the trend of digital literacy at a rapid pace. Cities have always been more digitally literate compared to rural regions; however, the latter has been slowly narrowing. As a result of it, urban digital literacy improved from 45.3 per cent to 70.5 per cent

and rural digital literacy improved from 12.8 per cent to 33.1 per cent over the same period. These figures point to intervention at the rural level by enhancing area-based online schooling programs in a way that this trend continues in the same direction and increases the urban rural digital literacy gap

- ii) **Employee Digital Competence and Industry Transitions:** The proportion of workers who possess digital competences increased dramatically from 15.3 per cent in 2019 to 37.8 per cent in 2023, indicating a rise in the use of digital technology across the majority of industries. Primary sectors including IT, e-commerce, healthcare, and AI witnessed a greater demand for competent digital competences. This revolution is meant to realize the immediate requirement for frequent upskilling courses and re-balancing of education curriculum in response to shifting market demands. Particular emphasis must be given to newer frontier fields of study such as robotics, data science, and artificial intelligence in order to equip the workforce with the necessary skills to compete in an ever-changing digital economy.
- iii) **Government Spending and Programme Coverage:** Government spending on skill development also increased significantly from INR 800 crores in 2019 to INR 2,300 crores in 2023 under programs like the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) and Skill India Mission. This growth has enabled an all-time rise in beneficiaries from 0.156 crore in 2019 to 0.451 crore in 2023. Challenges persist to ensure the distribution as equitable as possible while maximizing program effectiveness, particularly in rural and remote locations. Focus Areas in Training Courses: The focus areas in training courses have changed from time to time to advanced areas of artificial intelligence, cyber-security, and health informatics by the year 2023. The adults aged between 18–24 would likely enroll, especially in digital marketing and programming software. But today more than ever, it is increasingly necessary to take training across wide ranges of age in attempting to make the most of lifelong learning and provide all segments of population with the skill-sets to better utilize the digital economy.

**Conclusion:** Digital literacy and Upskilling development is the best achievement of India that requires multi-dimensional efforts to overcome regional disparities. Embracing proposed strategies, India is likely to become a digitally empowered, competitive global economy.

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