

# Empowering Elderly through Digital Literacy

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**Abstract - In the twenty-first century, population ageing is a major demographic issue for India. With growing technology and the Digital World, it is difficult for the elderly to keep up with the latest technology. Elders are distracted and isolated by today's continuously increasing digital literacy and excessive movement toward using online payment. Their daily lives, shopping, and Paytm utility bills become more difficult, and they become estranged from the younger generation who are digitally savvy. Digital literacy gives many benefits to the elderly to improve their quality of life.**

**Keywords - Empower, Elderly, Digital literacy.**

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## INTRODUCTION

Every man, woman, and child is affected by the pervasive phenomenon of population ageing. The shape of the nation's population pyramid has changed over the past couple of decades and it no longer has a broad base and a thin tip. Simply put, population policies and the ensuing social and economic changes have caused a significant drop in the birth rate. This has led to population ageing along with declining death rates and rising longevity. However, the issues that result from it will affect underdeveloped, developing, and developed nations differently (HelpAge India Research & Development Journal, 2017).

## INDIAN SCENARIO

In elderly population, India is turning fast next only to China, which has the greatest population of senior citizens worldwide. Population ageing is a persistent issue in India, where the percentage of senior citizens grew throughout the 20th century. For the remainder of the twenty-first century, this trend is anticipated to persist. By 2015 (111.9 million, 8.7%), it is predicted that this will surpass 100 million people, and by 2050, it will have risen to 315.6 million (19.6 percent). Also indicating the ageing of the elderly is the fact that the oldest old among them are growing older more quickly (HelpAge India Research & Development Journal, 2017)

## DIGITAL LITERACY AND ELDERLY

The Digital World and ever-evolving technology make it challenging for the elderly to stay current. The rapidly changing digital technology of today, along with the growing popularity of online payment, is isolating and disabling for older people. Their day-to-day activities, shopping, and Paytm utility bills become more challenging, and they grow distant from technologically

savvy people. The elderly can benefit greatly from technology in terms of raising their quality of life.

Elderly people are ignorant of digital illiterates. Learning how to communicate on social media sites like Facebook and WhatsApp is also essential. For the elderly to become more digitally empowered, HelpAge India holds workshops on digital literacy. The elderly can access more digital applications thanks to these classes. Young enthusiastic volunteers who enjoy giving their time and efforts to help our elders become digitally literate lead these workshops. With more than 10 lakh members, over 5000 Senior Citizens Associations in India are currently affiliated with HelpAge India.

Older adults can use technology to stay independent, active, and healthy. Older people are purchasing new smartphone models, which are being released on the market at a record-breaking rate each day, new mobile applications, and using ATMs. At the national level, only 5 percent of male elderly who use the internet whereas 3 percent are female users (ElderAbuseInIndia, 2018).

According to a report by HelpAge India titled Elder Abuse in India (2018), 90 percent of elders in India use social media, and 61 percent of them use Facebook, WhatsApp (56 percent) and YouTube (40 percent). Social media is used by seniors to connect with friends and family. The elderly also have better health knowledge and can communicate their issues on social media. Social media has boosted the social learning abilities of the elderly, according to 74 percent of seniors.

Bedi (2015) in use of the social media and well-being in elderly some important observations shows that with the help of social media elderly share memories with family and friends. The main reasons why

seniors use social media are to combat loneliness and social isolation. The elderly regularly use Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Flickr, and other social media platforms to share videos, pictures, and memories. The elderly are becoming more interested in watching home videos on Facebook, YouTube, and other websites. Through coupons and other discounts on social media sites, social media gives seniors many opportunities to save money. Additionally, it provides an avenue for communication and connection with family and friends without having to leave the house for the elderly and their families. Elderly people's self-competence, mental health, and wellbeing are improved through social media.

Kanwal (2015) in ICT Enabled Twilight Zone: Needs of Ageing in Contemporary India argued that despite of being ICT as a useful tool elderly people faced challenges in using them. Indian youth have no trouble using ICT, but getting elderly people to feel comfortable with it can be difficult. The researcher identified four areas where ICT could be very helpful for elderly people. These are as follows: (a) Health, since everything is online, the health department can provide assistance to elderly people via any digital platform without having to physically visit them. Even if cared for on time, it can save many elderly people's lives, so ICT can be a quick and dependable area we can rely on. (b) Independence, elderly people feel independent when they use social media or mobile phones, and they can connect with their family members even when they are not present; (c) Productivity, not only young people, but also elderly people, become productive when they use the digital platform; (d) Security, an online platform not only provides physical security, but also financial security and emotional stability.

## OBJECTIVE

To find out the emerging issues of mobility and use of technology accessed by the elderly.

## SAMPLING

The present study has been carried out with the objective to find out the emerging issues of mobility and use of technology accessed by the elderly. For this, an exploratory research design has been used. The exploratory research design has helped to have an in-depth understanding of the use of technology by the elderly. It is a comparative study of two cities of Haryana namely Rohtak and Gurugram.

Elderly use the internet for shopping, and Paytm utility bills and easy to make their day-to-day life:

**Table 1: Purpose of using the internet by the elderly**

Sr. No	Purpose of using internet	Rohtak N-95	Gurugram N-143	Total N- 238
1	Work-related	16 (16.84)	23 (16.08)	39 (16.39)
2	Education related	12 (12.63)	19 (13.29)	31 (13.03)
3	Social media	92 (96.84)	143 (100)	235 (98.74)
4	To access websites	23 (24.21)	33 (23.08)	56 (23.53)
5	For online shopping	10 (10.53)	32 (22.38)	42 (17.65)
6	Internet banking	14 (14.74)	21 (14.69)	35 (14.71)
7	To check emails	11 (11.58)	18 (12.59)	29 (12.18)
	Total	178	289	467

\*Percentages are given in bracket

\*\*Multiple responses

The present table no. 1 illustrates the purpose of using internet. In Rohtak city, there were 96.84 percent of respondents who use the internet to spend time on social media, followed by 24.21 percent of respondents who use the internet to access websites and of respondents use the internet for work. In contrast data of Gurugram city, there were 100 percent of respondents use the internet to spend time on social media, followed by 23.08 percent of respondents who use the internet to access websites and 22.38 percent of respondents use the internet for online shopping. The figures show i.e. in both cities, respondents use the internet to spend time on social media.

The following case study was also conducted to show the purpose of using social media. Capt. Arjun Singh 73 years old and belongs to jaat cast lives in sector 4 Gurugram. He completed his graduation and is a retired captain of the army. His annual income is 15 lakh. He is the head of the family and lives in a joint. Capt. Arjun Singh plays an important role in his family. He wakes up at 6:00 am and then he goes for a walk in the park, comes from home reads the newspaper, daily updates news from his smartphone and then waters the plants. His daily routine consists of a morning walk, reading the newspaper, gardening. "Mere pas ek smart phone hai aur mai apne smart phone se apne pariwar or frindes connect rhne keliye message krta hu. Mai social media pr bhut active hu. Mai facebook or watsapp par apni post or status dalta rhata hu aur kuch social groups se bhijudahu. Mai youtube pr purane gaane bhi sunta hu. Mai apne smartphone se Bijli or panika online bills bhibhartahu or online shopping bhikartahu. jab bhi market se kuch saman le ne jata hu to mai Paytm se payment kartahu." (I use smartphone and send messages through my smartphone, to connect with friends and family. I am very active on social media. I am updating my post and status on Facebook and WhatsApp and am also active in some social groups. I am listening to the old songs on YouTube. I am also to pay bills for water and electricity by phone

and also do online shopping. When I go to the market for shopping to make payments using Paytm and ATM card.)

## **CONCLUSION**

As regards the comparative analysis regarding empowering elders through digital literacy both cities, use the internet for many purposes. They use the internet to reduce social isolation and loneliness. Elderly establishes new relationships to use social media and also in touch with family members and friends through messages and video calls. Elderly see movies and listens to a song on YouTube to reduce their loneliness. On the internet, they also pay water and electricity bills and also use check emails. However, the elderly are still engaged in many activities on the internet. Only some of the elderly are connected to the internet. Elderly face many technical difficulties and lack of knowledge. To learn and improve their knowledge regarding new technology, the internet gives classes for the elderly. For this class, the elderly increase a sense of self-competence.

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