



The Importance of Including Digital Literacy as a part of Curriculum in Higher Education Today

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Abstract- The present paper is an attempt to discuss the awareness of digital literacy among the youth. Today's youth spend most of their time on the Internet. They are digital natives as they have lived their entire lives surrounded by social media and it is crucial to have a good knowledge of digital literacy for young minds. As we know the digital worlds contain opportunities as well as risks for young people. In light of the above, there is an urgent need to investigate the developmental trajectory in young people's understanding of digital literacy. It also deals with the challenges and issues related to technology and cybercrime. Not surprisingly, the interactions of young minds with technology have raised questions and concerns. Research has begun to uncover the many different ways that technology intersects young people's lives. The main objective of this paper is to present a balanced and comprehensive account of youth's digital worlds for their development and well-being.

Keywords: Digital Literacy, Youth, Information Technology, Education.

Introduction

We all want to see India becoming the greatest country of the 21st century by 2047. But question is how so we make India the greatest country of the world. The answer is very simple. By making it driven by the young minds of the nation. For which we need to be encouraging them to learn 21st century skills. There are many 21st century skills but out of them some are extremely important. The first and foremost is digital literacy. In an age of information technology and artificial intelligence, this is the real time when the young minds need to have digital literacy to the top of it.

Digital literacy is the ability to use digital tools to solve problems, produce innovative projects, enhance communication, and collaborate effectively to meet the challenges of an increasingly digital world. It is an ability to combine technical and cognitive skills to successfully find, evaluate, create and communicate information and to tell impactful stories. It is experience to know when why and how to use digital tools productively, creatively and ethically. When students become digitally literate, they can express their personal stories, engage with courses and subject matter to gain a deeper understanding, enhance their career prospects and learn new ways to fully participate in civic life.

Foundational digital skills exist on a continuum from basic to advanced. On one end are basic skills of how to use information and communications technology, or “digital tools”—for example, being able to turn on a computer, use a mouse, or access the internet. The next level of skills involves using these tools to carry out specific digital tasks, such as writing an email, making a résumé, or searching for specific information on the internet. These tasks are often taught in a specific context—such as using a certain software or specific platform or application—and have clearly defined steps to accomplish the task. A higher level of foundational digital skills is being able to take the knowledge of how to accomplish specific digital tasks and applying it to new circumstances, contexts, or platforms. For example, a person can work with a database to retrieve information or look up his or her hours on a digital scheduling system. At the next level, a person could use his or her knowledge to retrieve information from different databases or use the scheduling system to set schedules for others. We refer to this as being “digitally literate,” being able to combine base knowledge and problem solving to approach new platforms and uses. As digital technology, platforms, and applications change, digital literacy means people can more easily learn new digital tasks.

Today young students need to develop skills that enable them to adapt. For example, a recent study of job posting across 18 fields found that employers now prioritize communication, creativity, collaboration and critical thinking as essential skills. The digital economy is rapidly transforming the employment landscape across industries including financial services, health, entertainment, transportation and information and communication technologies. Millions of jobs advanced digital skills will be created in the coming decade, but many countries are projecting a shortfall of skilled workers to fill these jobs. In particular, jobs requiring coding and other advanced ICT skills are going unfilled. Research suggests the demand for jobs requiring digital skills will increase. The number of jobs requiring digital skills is predicted to increase 12 percent by 2024. A McKinsey Global Institute study projects the impacts of automation and growth in demand for different skills, including foundational digital skills. By 2030, the authors project the number of work hours using basic digital skills will increase 69 percent. Increases in hours using basic digital skills will be large in the manufacturing, health care, and energy and mining industries. The literature suggests that the demand for digital skills will continue to increase even as automation becomes more common. And this increase in demand will happen across the board. Occupations as diverse as construction and nursing are likely to see more digitally intensive tasks and therefore greater demand for workers with foundational digital skills.

Digital literacy skills

1. **Critical thinking-** It is an ability to think clearly and rationally, understanding the logical connections between the ideas. To be able to think, critically, students need to be able to analyse and evaluate information and arguments, see patterns and connections, identify and build meaningful information then they need to apply it to a real-world context and be able to put it in their own words.
2. **Online safety skills-** It means being aware about your personal security while sharing, browsing and surfing the Internet. Most students nowadays have unlimited access to the internet and it is important that they are able to navigate these online environments safely. The best way is that a teacher can cover some topics like cyber-bullying, sexting, age-appropriate content, photo sharing and permission, online exploitation, plagiarism and copyright in the classroom to raise awareness and to develop good online practices with your students.
3. **Collaboration-** Technology is one of the best tools to promote and enhance collaboration skills. It makes collaboration and teamwork easy. Peer learning and collaboration can be created with your students using a variety of online mediums. Teachers often use Google Classroom to collect and disseminate work. This allows users to edit and modify both content and structure collaboratively. By using online collaboration tools students are able to contribute, revise and edit, comment, reference and study. It increases both achievement and productivity.
4. **Communication skills-** Educating the students about their digital footprint and respectful online communication will help them curate a safe social media presence. Young people are spending more

time online and can often not realise how much information they are actually sharing with the world. Here are some tips for practicing safe online communication:

- Share only what you are comfortable with.
- Opt out location services.
- Be mindful of other people's feeling.
- Regularly check your privacy setting.
- Don't give away your information.

In educational context, adequate literacy of digital tools also has an important role in developing insight of material to the certain subject through encourage the creativity and curiosity. Research shows that using technology, such as e-library and e-text, lead students to be better due it allowing them to be creative, good, and up-to-date presentations. Digital literacy is considered as an essential part of the development of the learning process in higher education. The Ministry of Information and Technology in collaboration with UNICEF provides information that around 75% of children an adolescents aged 10-19 years in India are internet and digital media users.

Conclusion- The global economy and market is driven by digital literacy and skill development. They are striving to improve the clean image of the industry and the services sector. Today, we Indians make up around 17% of the world population, while we have only 2% of the world resources. Nutrition and conservation of the large population with limited resources are a big challenge in such a situation. In order to strengthen the Indian economy, it is necessary to focus on digital skills and training of the large number of young people in rural India. In recent years, the central and state government has been working to connect the strong hands of marginalized rural India to the mainstream of our economy by implementing various schemes. As the youth work force of rural India continues to benefit from the schemes, it will lead the rural society to self-sufficiency. This will strengthen the economy of India and increase our participation and contribution to the global market.

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