

General Studies-2; Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

Impact of Digital Economy on Women in India

1) Introduction

- Digital Economy refers to the full range of economic, social and cultural activities supported by the Internet and related information and communications technologies.
- Women play a crucial role in the growth of the economy.
- Over the years, Indian women have made a substantial impact and achieved success across sectors, both within the country and overseas.
- Digitalization offers a variety of opportunities for female empowerment and for a more equal female participation in labour markets, financial markets, and entrepreneurship.

2) Benefits

- Digitalization is a positive move for Indian woman.
- Digital economy allows opportunities for 'flexi-work' and diminishes the reliance on physical workspaces and balancing work-home commitments.
- Access to economic prosperity and the benefits of technology to women will have a positive impact on the whole of society.
- Increased incomes for poor mothers results in immediate dietary improvements for their children.
- Direct Benefit Transfer makes women have greater access to finances which improve the socio-economic circumstances of women.
- Enable women entrepreneurs to succeed and to grow their business at the same rate as their male counterparts.
- Digital payments can promote women's economic empowerment and yield social and economic gains.
- Promotes formal savings.

3) Concerns / Challenges

- Economic gender inequality could be costly for the global economy in general and Indian economy in particular.
- Key challenge is unequal access to the internet.
- Getting women educated about the digital world.
- The gender gap in mobile ownership
- According to a survey, in rural areas majority of the women who owned cellphones did not know how to operate the phone.
- There have been numerous report of khap panchayats and other conservative groupings banning or restricting mobile phone use for women
- Gender biased belief and value systems that impose restrictions on the education and free mobility of women.
- Sometimes digital technologies can act as tools of control and surveillance, not empowerment.
- Cumbersome banking procedures and delayed funds flow under DBT in some cases.
- Automation is expected to spread across most sectors and occupations, affecting women.

4) Way Forward

- If women are to realize their full potential in the digital age, the government need to target the current gender gaps.
- Help women complement their social skills with higher education and advanced digital skills
- Support high-quality online platforms to foster women's entrepreneurial skills
- Popularize innovative web-based instruments that improve female entrepreneurs' access to financial capital
- Governments can develop customer protection frameworks to help protect women with low financial literacy and build trust in digital payments.
- For 'Make in India' to grow even further, women should be considered and promoted as key drivers.
- Blockchain technology can improve the financial inclusion of women in the economy. Blockchain lowers costs, shortens settlement times, and can provide a user-friendly experience for payments.
- Only 29% of India's internet users are women. This digital gender divide must be bridged.
- Making the Internet accessible, open and safe is an urgent priority.
- Need for broader shifts in social and cultural belief systems

