



## Digital inequalities, Gender gap and Marginals: A Critical study

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**Abstract:** *In today's environment, women are not only misrepresented in top leadership positions Organizations but the rate of progress for women's career advancement has been slow (Duke, 2017). The internet has enormous potential to increase social justice, empower and improve the daily lives of the marginal communities of society. This paper presents the study of Gujjar women in Delhi and Haryana. Generally, the community is known for their wealthy families, social dominance and power. Contrary to this, the women's representation is quite not satisfactory. There are many obstacles, such as unequal access to education, lack of technical skills, lack of financial resources, their families making a decision on their behalf, lack of family understanding and sometime traditional moral values. The goal is to overcome simple digital divisions to understand how women members of Gujjar communities are considered as marginalized and represented as traditional and stereotype. This is often framed as a 'digital inequalities' and needs to be addressed through initiatives that increase the availability of information and communication technologies. The aim of this study is to analyze and understand digital inequalities categories to recognize how Gujjar Women members of society incorporate computers and the internet into their daily lives in ways that are meaningful to them. The results of the study also contribute to a better understanding of the barriers that perpetuate gender inequality, particularly in managerial and executive positions. The methodology of this study would be mainly based on primary data. Besides, some secondary data will also be taken into consideration.*

**Keywords:** *Digital inequalities, Marginal, Gender Gap, Technology, Digital Media*

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### Introduction

At the present time of media globalization, India has gained a majority---- and its population is growing in the working age group, which gives it an advantage in professional dealing of information for effective interactions. The digitalization has given a new direction to the flow of information and growth of every sections of society. The way people are developing and interacting, digital media plays a core role. In fact, the young population is very close to the digital flow of information and they have the appropriate ability to exploit this social and professional competition. This is remarkable, that the world is changing, ICTs have been sneaking through all walks of life.

Digital Media and ICT's are playing very vital and decisive role in the development of every section of the society. ICT diffusion is present in almost all spheres of the life such as financial, educational and health sectors, which have made these areas more dynamic and up-to-date. Without the knowledge to use ICT, it's not possible (to get an inequalities and younger population is not in vain) not clear. It's age of technologies, but there are still some sections of people, who are not that much familiar with the use of technologies. In this respect the society



is inequalities d into two main divisions, i.e. "techno-savvy" and " non-savvy". This phenomenon is called the " digital inequalities." The term digital inequalities came in the 1990's, which indicates the questions that how the market and the social elements are using technologies and developing new information infrastructure. This term also refers to the difference between individuals, households, enterprises and geographical regions of different socio-economic levels in their access to information and communication technologies and internet use. The concepts also pointed out that the digital inequalities mean the difference between those with effective access to digital data and. The countries like India, where the social system is very intense and have no limit. Similarly, the technologies also have a division in its level of acceptance and use. It also includes an imbalance in the physical availability of technology and an imbalance in the resources and skills needed for effective participation as a digital citizen.

In this research paper, the researchers have tried to explore the digital inequalities in the special context to the women of the Gujjar community in Delhi- Haryana region. Generally, the community is known for their wealthy families, social dominance and power. Contrary to this, the women's representation is quite not satisfactory. There are many obstacles, such as unequal access to education, lack of technical skills, lack of financial resources, their families making a decision on their behalf, lack of family understanding and sometime traditional moral values. The goal is to overcome simple digital divisions to understand how women members of Gujjar communities are considered as marginalized and represented as traditional and stereotype. This is often framed as a 'digital inequalities' and needs to be addressed through initiatives that increase the availability of information and communication technologies. The aim of this study is to analyze and understand digital inequalities categories to recognize how Gujjar Women members of society incorporate computers and the internet into their daily lives in ways that are meaningful to them. The results of the study also contribute to a better understanding of the barriers that perpetuate gender inequality, particularly in managerial and executive positions.

### **Theoretical framework**

The term digital inequalities are very popular in the present contemporary era of technology. The concepts of digital inequalities is a difference that exists in our developed society. The accessibility of modern technology is equal to everyone, but this is also a fact that there are certain sections of the society, which have limited access to the digital frame of technology. The same phenomenon is used here in this research work. The women in the Gujjar communities are not the same in terms of digital accessibility. The historical perspective of Gujjar community is very rich with rich wealth and heritage, sound background and landlord by nature. Therefore, the community is very grown in terms of property, but this is also a fact that the community is very conservative and restricted in terms of gender equality. In order to focus public attention, there is a gap in access to information between male and female of this community, in this way the gender based digital inequalities refers to the differences between genders in terms of access to ICTs and Inequality of access to ICTs.

Secondly, digital inequalities can be considered as a inequality in distribution and utilization of communication technology. There are some issues related to the access and potential use of communication technology. There are also philosophical and sociological aspects of digital inequality, because the potential missed opportunity belongs to people (mainly women) to get desirable jobs and improve their lives through computers and the Internet (Friedman, 2001). At present, the digital inequalities are intense and restricted at almost everywhere in this community at all levels. Specifically, as gender gap and this gap take its specific context,



phenomena, development trends, perspectives and its specific transition solutions and initiatives. Digitalization is on the one hand considered as a boon for the socioeconomic and cultural development, but this is also a fact that gender gap and restricted social perspectives of the digital inequalities is a dynamic problem. Ahmed (2007) notes that the digital inequalities is a complex and dynamic problem with political, cultural and ethical issues.

### Objective

- To examine the determinants of digital inequalities in Gujjar community.
- To study the digital inequalities and its value in the gender inequality.

### Research Methodology

The main objective of this study was to discuss the determinants of digital inequalities in India and to analyze the scenario of the digital inequalities. A pilot study has been done through random sampling method with the working females in the Haryana and Delhi region. The respondents taken were of age group, i.e. 15-30 years of age.

1. **Sample Size:** This research study will be based on the feedback of around 75 working women of the Gujjar community in Haryana region. Out of 75, 32 belongs to age group 15-20 years, 25 belong to age group 21-25 and 18 respondents belongs to 26-30 years. The location of the research is: *Badkhal village of Faridabad, Aalli village and the Mandi village of South Delhi* which include people of different socioeconomic background.
2. **Sampling Type:** A non-probability-based sampling method has been taken into consideration, specifically convenient sampling method. The data for the present research was collected with the help of a questionnaire in a cross sectional survey.

**Analytical and Statistical Tools:** The data for the research works has been collected through questionnaire and analyzed with MS-Excel/word and tabulation have been applied to show the frequency and percentage of the responses provided by the respondents.

### Discussion and Analysis

The digital inequalities is the kind of division that is visible not only in the least developed and developing countries, but also the developed countries are not free from its influence. Chakraborty and Bosman (2005) noted that there is clear evidence that gender-related inequality relates to home ownership of a certain community across the country. Today, there are many types of digital inequalities at local, national, regional or global levels, such as gender sharing, income sharing by age, each of which has its specific context, phenomena, development trends, perspectives, as well as its specific solutions and initiatives (Boje & Dragulanescu, 2003). Due to the continuous development of Information technologies and new technologies, the digital inequalities is a dynamic problem. Ahmed (2007) notes that the digital inequalities is a complex and dynamic problem with a political, cultural and ethical dimension. The above discussions may say that the digital inequalities is a very complex phenomenon and a common problem worldwide, but depending on the country and circumstances, its causes vary. This section examines the various factors underlying India's digital inequalities. India is still working on its ICTs, using technology in terms of internet use and penetration.



In the present research, the core focus was to understand the digital inequalities and its relation in terms of the gender inequalities. The research has mainly considered the level of use and accessibility of internet based use of digital media and its application in the women of the Gujjar community in Delhi-Haryana region. The parameter survey has been conducted and the following points were analyzed systematically.

**Table: 1.1 Age-wise (female) Accessibility of Internet**

The table 1.1 indicates the internet is well accepted media among the youth of Delhi-Haryana. This data mainly came from the Gujjar community where internet has mainly been used by the women's of this community. The use is well marked by almost all sections of age group.

Age-group	Percentage
15-25	95%
25-35	82%
	62%

Gender	Internet user
Below 25	86%
Above 25	14%

**Table: 1.2 Gender-wise internet users**

Table 1.2. Pointed out the gender based use of the internet and its applications, it was well marked that the female respondents below 25 years of age segment, i.e. 86% has more accessibility and freedom to use internet in comparison to above 25 years female segment of the community.

Age	Internet User
18-20	84%
21-25	75%
26-30	66%

**Table: 1.3 Age wise (female) Distribution of internet**

Table 1.3 pointed out that the internet usability of female members of the Gujjar community is very alarming. As indicated in the table mainly the age group of 18-30 years old are interested in the internet surfing i.e. 84%. It shows that the internet based interest of female members are not as male members.

Year	Semi-Rural	Urban
2019-2020	36%	88%

**Table: 1.4 Connectivity and Understanding of cyber-world**

In the course of this research, the researcher has also pointed out that the percentage of semi-rural female in terms of internet usability is very poor i.e. 36% only. The semi-rural areas include the NCR region of Delhi, where the Gujjar community has some rural and conservative background too.

Factors Responsible for Gender Inequalities	Percentage
Cultural restrictions	78%
Traditional value and female's stereotypical image	76%
Lack of sociological support	76%
Male domination in family	89%
Less importance to gender inequalities	89%
Lack of digital literacy skills	65%



**Table: 1.5 Reason Behind Low Connectivity and Gender Inequalities in Gujjar Community**

In this research the main objective was to understand the digital inequalities and its relation to gender inequalities. The present research very clearly indicates that the percentage of internet usability is very low in female members of the Gujjar community. The gender inequality was very intense and the reason the gender inequality is not only due to sociological factor, but there are many others factors which it states the core reason for the gender inequality in the said community of Delhi-Haryana region. There are many social factors (mentioned in table 1.5) such as male domination, lack of literacy skills, gender inequalities, female stereotype image. Overall, the research explained that the digital reach to the female segment is very rare. This states that the digital inequalities and gender inequality is very visible in the Gujjar community of Delhi-Haryana.

**Conclusion**

This paper examined the various factors and aspect of the digital inequalities in India. According to the analysis, internet use is very important in the socio-political and cultural development of society. The use of internet has provided a new dimension to the social growth, and the digital inclusion can be achieved by supporting and improving the basic structure of digital literacy. The analysis also identified that there are close relationship between the digital inequalities gender equality as the use of digital framework is open for everyone, but there are still some communities which are restricted and dominated by the cultural limitations. This paper clearly satisfies the objectives mentioned in the research. Certainly, there are many factors responsible for the digital inequalities and gender inequality in Gujjar Community. Undoubtedly, the social and cultural factors are responsible for the digital inequalities in the Gujjar community as its values are not the same for male and female member of the community. As per the finding of the study, it is very sharp and lucid to conclude that the digital inequalities are very much correlated with gender inequalities. This gives an idea about the gender based gap and openness in the use of digital media. The Gujjar community is normally considered as a conservative community with restricted behavior for female members. The present study, therefore, concluded that the female members are marginal and there is a gender inequality which shows the clear digital inequalities phenomenon in the community. As a part of the recommendation, the researcher wish to mention that it is very important for the media and media leaders to generate awareness about the constructive use of online media and focus on the creative media literacy so that the positive and constructive use of media would be possible for overall growth of every section of the society and limit the gap in gender inequalities



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