

Lifelong Learning for Digital inclusion of Women – Issues and Strategies for Sustainable Development



Tirupati, July 27-28, 2026: A two-day National Seminar on “**Lifelong Learning for Digital Inclusion of Women – Issues and Strategies for Sustainable Development**” was organized at the Saveri Seminar Hall, Sri Padmavati Mahila Visvavidyalayam (SPMVV), Tirupati, on July 27 and 28, 2026.

The seminar was jointly organized by the **Centre for Women’s Studies, SPMVV, the Indian Adult Education Association (IAEA), New Delhi, and the Sarvodaya Women Welfare Society, Tirupati**. The programme brought together academicians, researchers, young scholars and practitioners to deliberate on the challenges and opportunities associated with women’s digital inclusion and empowerment.

Dr. Ashima Mangla, Joint Secretary, University Grants Commission (UGC), New Delhi, was the Chief Guest at the inaugural session. In her inaugural address, she emphasized that technological empowerment of women is essential for the development of families, society and the nation. She highlighted lifelong learning as an important instrument for women’s empowerment and stressed the need to address barriers such as financial constraints, language barriers, socio-cultural challenges and concerns regarding online safety.

She observed that digital literacy has become a necessity in the 21st-century knowledge economy and is essential for women’s education, employment, healthcare, financial independence, entrepreneurship and civic participation. She also emphasized the need to bridge the continuing gender digital divide by ensuring equal access to technology, digital education and online services.

Mr. Suresh Khandelwal, General Secretary, Indian Adult Education Association, New Delhi, highlighted the importance of expanding opportunities for women to acquire technological skills. **Prof. Rajesh, Director I/c, Indian Adult Education Association, New Delhi**, emphasized the role of digital inclusion in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through awareness, training and equal opportunities. **Prof. L. Raja, President, Indian Adult Education Association**, observed that digital technology has become an integral part of women's everyday lives and stressed the importance of providing women with appropriate skills and institutional support.

In her presidential address, **Prof. P. Vijayalakshmi, Dean, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Management, and Director, Centre for Women's Studies, SPMVV**, emphasized the need to bridge the gender gap in digital education and ensure equal access to digital learning opportunities. **Dr. D. Uma Devi, Seminar Director and Associate Professor, Centre for Women's Studies**, outlined the objectives of the seminar, while **Prof. P. Adinarayana Reddy, Seminar Coordinator and President, Sarvodaya Women Welfare Society**, highlighted the role of digital education in women's social and economic empowerment.

The two-day seminar comprised **seven technical sessions, one plenary session and three panel discussions**, with **more than 40 research papers** presented. The major themes included the status of women in India, the digital divide and gender gap, women's empowerment and Artificial Intelligence (AI), lifelong learning for digital inclusion, cybercrimes against women, socio-cultural and economic barriers, digital safety and strategies for women's digital inclusion.



A panel discussion on **“Status of Women in India in Digital Inclusion”** examined the continuing digital gender gap despite the progress made through initiatives such as Digital India, digital banking, online education, telemedicine and e-Governance. The speakers emphasized affordable access to smartphones and internet services, digital literacy, STEM education, online safety and digital services in regional languages. Special attention was given to the digital challenges faced by rural and tribal women.

The technical sessions provided valuable insights into women's digital literacy, AI-enabled lifelong learning, digital entrepreneurship, economic empowerment, cyber safety and the role of higher education institutions. The discussions highlighted that the digital gender gap is influenced not only by lack of access to technology but also by poverty, educational inequalities, socio-cultural norms, gender stereotypes and lack of digital confidence.

A panel discussion on **“Gender Divide and Women Empowerment”** emphasized that women's empowerment is essential for creating an inclusive, equitable and sustainable society. The speakers stressed the importance of equal access to education, technology, digital skills, employment opportunities and supportive policies.

The plenary session on **“Role of Lifelong Learning for Digital Inclusion of Women”** highlighted lifelong learning as an effective pathway for enabling women, particularly those from rural, marginalized and economically disadvantaged communities, to acquire digital

skills, adapt to technological changes, improve employability and participate confidently in the digital economy.

A significant panel discussion on “**Cyber Crimes Against Women**” addressed online harassment, cyberbullying, identity theft, privacy violations and other digital threats. The participants emphasized digital literacy, awareness of cyber laws, responsible use of technology, timely reporting of offences and strong institutional support to ensure a safe and secure digital environment for women.

Recommendations

The major recommendations derived from the deliberations are as follows:

1. Women studies centres need to intervene to conceive and organize different types of programmes to cater the needs of different categories of women for their digital inclusion.
2. Awareness campaigns need to be conducted at the grassroot level through government and non-government organizations to cater different categories of women for their digital inclusion
3. The higher education institutions under their corporate responsibility should intervene to propose and organize the programmes through the departments
4. Imparting of technical know-how through online and offline courses are needed to different categories of women depending on their needs and education.
5. The women studies centres and lifelong learning departments and other departments conducting extension activities need to collaborate with the technical and computer departments to coin the courses and they should be designed in a simple and pragmatic way so as to enable the digital inclusion of women
6. The special programmes such as kalajathas and other offline and online programmes need to be spread extensively in the society to reduce the cyber crimes against women.
7. The women from the unorganized sectors and tribal areas must be given special emphasis not only to create awareness but also for imparting knowledge about the digital things and use of internet
8. There is a need to establish a digital platform to deal with the aspects of digital inclusion and related issues.
9. The persons from legal departments should explain the legal interventions dealing with the digital issues and the punishments attached with the cyber or digital crimes
10. Widespread use of all types of media should be used for wide spread of information regarding the digital matters. **Valedictory Session**

The valedictory session was held on July 28 at 3:00 p.m. and was presided over by **Prof. P. Vijayalakshmi**. **Dr. D. Uma Devi** presented the report of the seminar.

Prof. L. Raja emphasized that lifelong learning enables women to adapt to technological changes, improve employability and participate in economic and social development. **Prof. Rajesh** highlighted lifelong learning as a pathway to bridge the digital divide, while **Prof. P. Adinarayana Reddy** stressed the importance of empowering women to become active participants in the digital age.

In her presidential address, Prof. P. Vijayalakshmi emphasized accessible lifelong learning opportunities, affordable digital devices and internet services, cyber-safety education and partnerships among governments, educational institutions, NGOs, technology companies and local communities. She also encouraged greater participation of women in STEM education, entrepreneurship and digital innovation.

The seminar highlighted the contribution of women's digital inclusion to **SDG 4 – Quality Education, SDG 5 – Gender Equality, SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, and SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities.**

Shri Suresh Khandelwal proposed the vote of thanks. The two-day National Seminar concluded with the **National Anthem.**

The seminar provided a significant academic platform for examining the challenges and opportunities associated with women's digital inclusion and reaffirmed that **lifelong learning is a powerful pathway for empowering women with the knowledge, skills and confidence required to participate meaningfully in the digital society and contribute to sustainable development.**