



DIGITAL INCLUSION - A NEED & REQUISITE IN TODAY'S COMPETITIVE WORLD

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ABSTRACT

Today's world, rather than today's updated world, is full of digitalization & has scrapped the traditional mode of living. In layman's language, we live in a digitally occupied world where adaptation to new & upgraded technology is a must. Every individual has to accept revolving changes & apply them to its day to day living. This has introduced a concept "Digital Inclusion" which states the involvement & access of each & every individual to the digital world. India is a country where illiteracy is climbing up more stairs than literacy. It becomes difficult for illiterate people to learn & adapt to new technologies as they don't possess the knowledge of the same. Hence, to cope up with this, digital inclusion becomes a requisite. This research paper studies the general perception of people of all ages towards digital inclusion & the way it must be taught & shared with everyone. The study is done in Mumbai City where data is collected from about 100 people having digital knowledge & experience. The data is collected through a questionnaire & personal interview where they share their own experience. The data was analyzed & interpreted on percentage basis & a conclusion was drawn out of it.

Keywords: *Digital Inclusion, Digitally occupied, Upgraded technology, Requisite, Digital world.*

INTRODUCTION

Digital inclusion is a term which implies that every individual must take the benefit of internet & technology which is upgraded as the world demands. It makes sure that everybody is reaching out to the facilities which are now available to us. Today's world is highly competitive & it chooses the one which has complete knowledge & experience about almost everything. With this, the country strives towards providing internet & other relevant facilities even to those areas where they are limited or not available. Mobile phones, laptops, tablets etc. plays a very important role in optimizing & curbing digital space to everyone. People have felt the importance of digitalization merely after the breakout of COVID 19 due to which everything went digital. Even children had to be digitally equipped as education has taken a new pace. Lectures, meetings, seminars, conferences etc. were all conducted online which is again an important part of the digital era. But for the entire country to be fully digital, there are many factors which need to be considered.

Requirements of digitalization

- 1. Knowledge of the digital world:** To have 100% digitalization, it is necessary for all of us to have complete knowledge of every aspect of digitalization. Up-gradation to the latest technology is essential to survive in this competitive world.
- 2. Internet facility:** Talking about technical aspects of digitalization, it will only work if we have a proper high speed internet facility everywhere. If the internet breaks down, digitalization would not progress.
- 3. Proper training & use:** Practice is what is needed to make everything work perfectly. Hence, knowledge is of no use until we start practicing it. People must adopt digitalization as a day to day need & use it in all walks of life. This will help make the entire country fully digitalized.
- 4. Updated technology:** Technology is a boom to the country which has made our lives easy & well versed. To have an optimum use of technology, one must have full knowledge of updated technology. Technology does not remain constant. It is dynamic. Hence, to survive in this competitive world, one must be ready to accept the change and update itself.

Digital Inclusion is a relatively new concept that attempts to address issues related to digital literacy and ICT. It can be viewed as a framework for addressing the readiness of communities to fully embrace the digital age. It includes availability & affordability of digital technology in the public sphere as well as household. Promotion of digital inclusion would increase the rates of education & employment leading to overall development of the economy.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the awareness of digital inclusion among people.
2. To know the perception of people towards digitalisation & its uses.
3. To study the factors necessary for a completely digitized country.
4. To find out the ways through which every single person can be included into the digital world.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- 1. Safa'A Abujarour, An-Najah National University (June 2021):** "Digital Inclusion: The Role of Information and Communication Technology alleviating Social Disruptions". This research paper was written during Covid times as Social disruptions had hit the world. The main purpose of writing this paper was to know how ICT has helped alleviate these disruptions by having a social inclusion of individuals and society. The paper mainly focuses on the conventional model of Work From Home (WFH) and experiences of people with respect to WFH.
- 2. Vanita, Karuna Sachdeva, I.B.P.G. College, Panipat (2017):** "Digital India - Opportunities and Challenges". This research paper is written with a view to highlight the different challenges faced by the Digital India Programme launched by our Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi to connect rural areas with

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high speed internet facility & improve digital literacy. It also describes the different opportunities of the programme for the people of the country.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study will help to know how each & every single person can become a part of the digital world. Also, it will further generate ideas to have an upgraded knowledge of digitalisation. The study will help the country to bring in those people who are partially or completely deprived of digital aspects & be fully digital.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was done by collecting primary data through a close-ended questionnaire. A questionnaire of about 15 questions (both open & close ended) was prepared & data was collected with the help of it. Sample size was 72 which means data was collected from 72 respondents. All the respondents were from Mumbai City as the research was done exclusively in the City. Also, the questionnaire consisted of 2 descriptive questions to know about the perception of respondents towards digitalization.

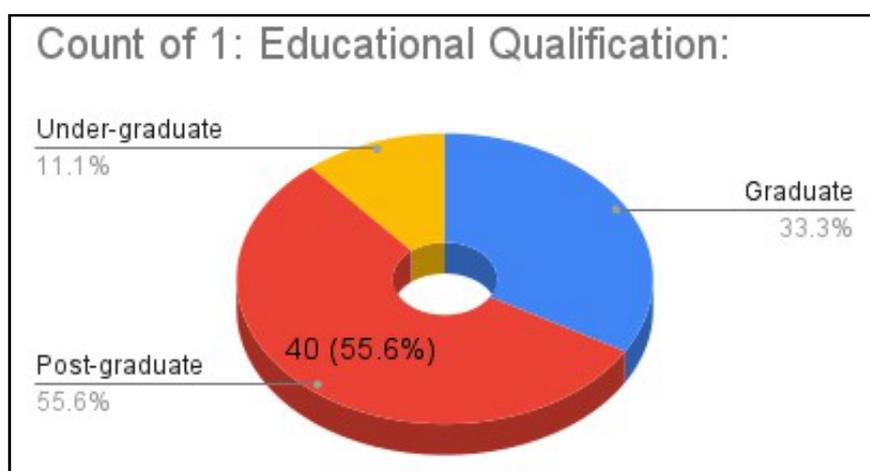
HYPOTHESIS

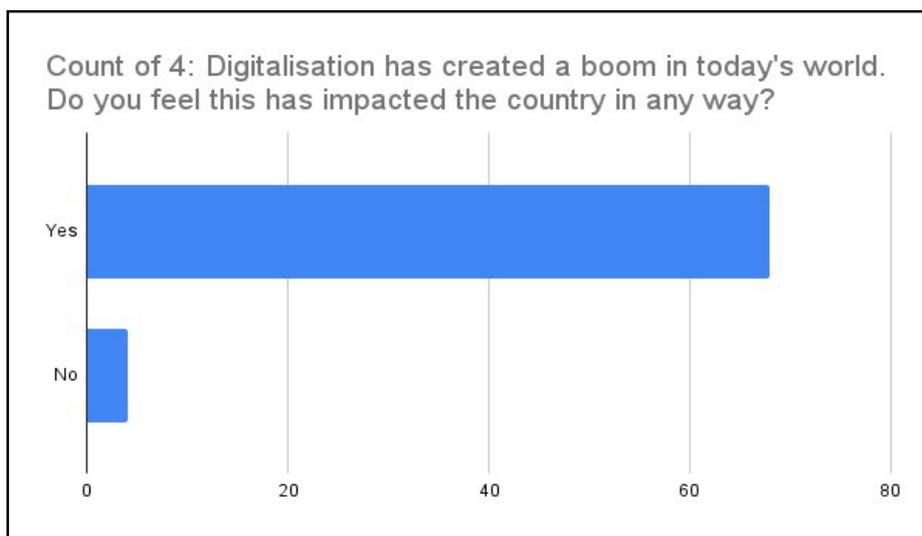
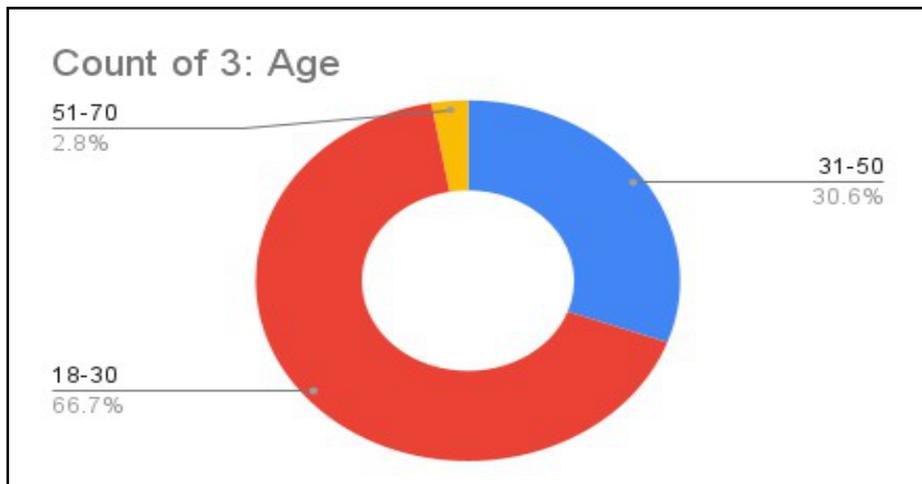
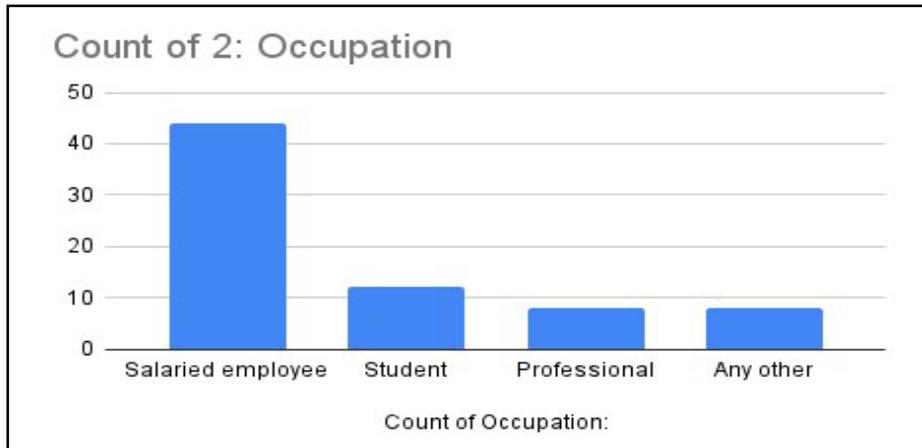
For the purpose of the study, the below given hypothesis was framed:

- **Null Hypothesis:** Digital Inclusion is not needed in today's world.
- **Alternative Hypothesis:** Digital Inclusion is needed in today's world.

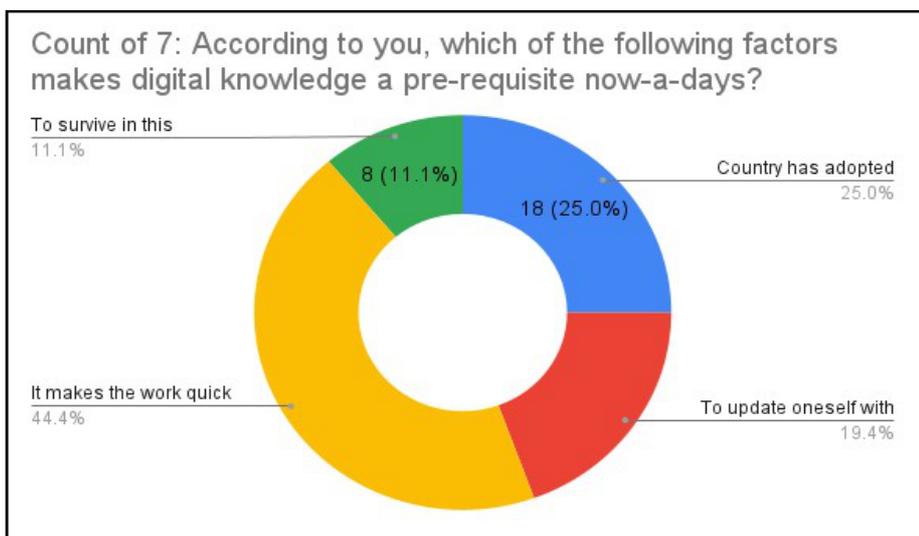
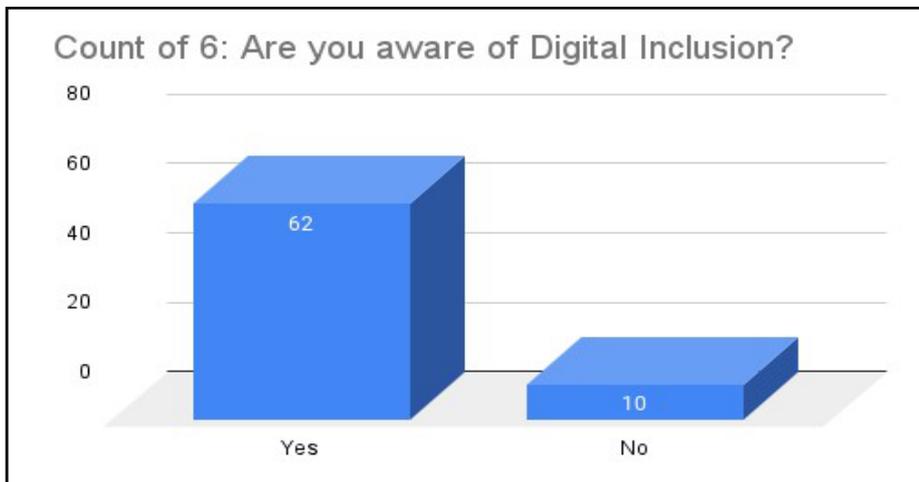
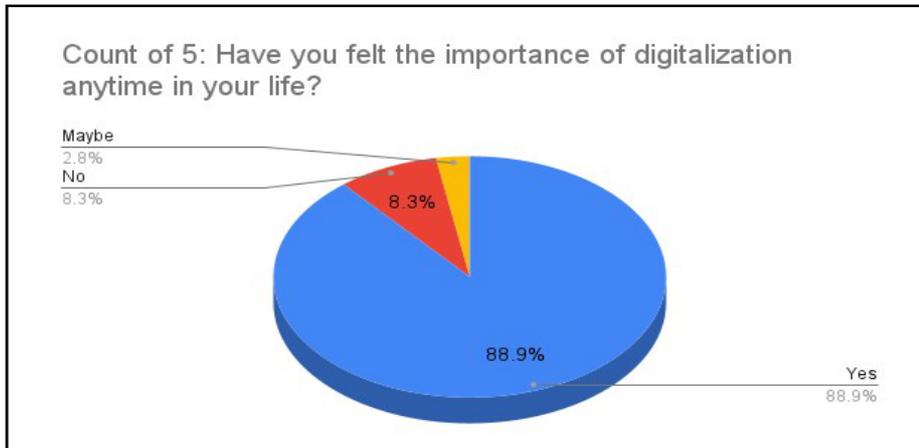
DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

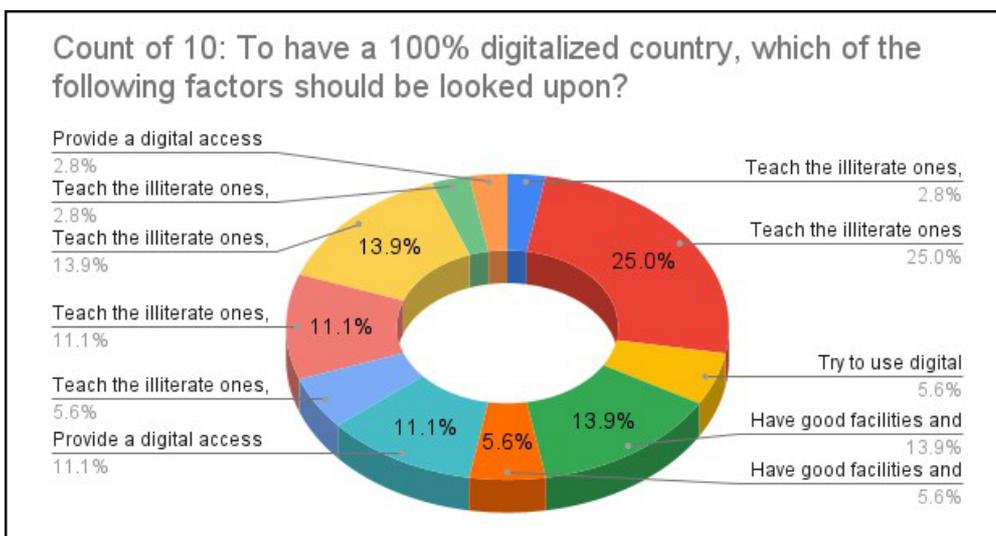
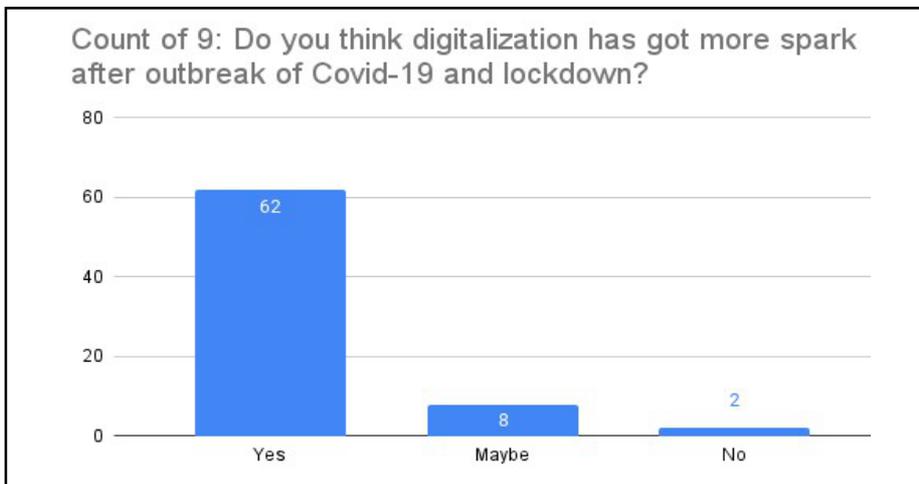
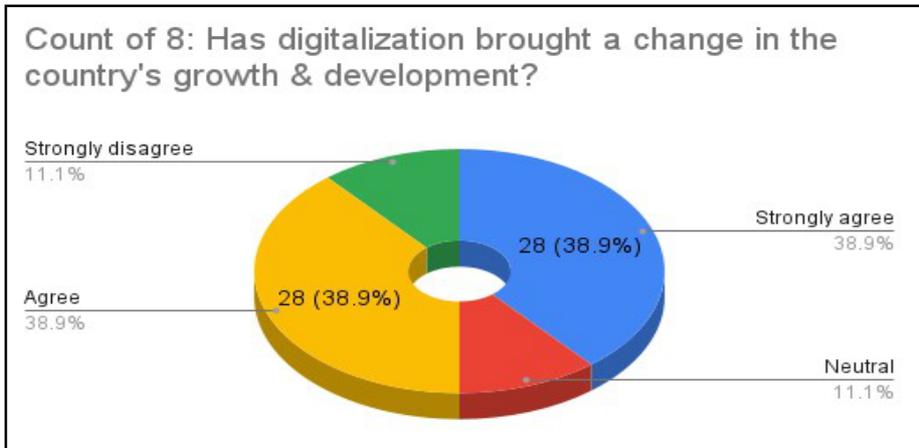
Data collected through the questionnaire was thoroughly analyzed & interpreted. All the data has been represented in diagrammatic & graphical form.



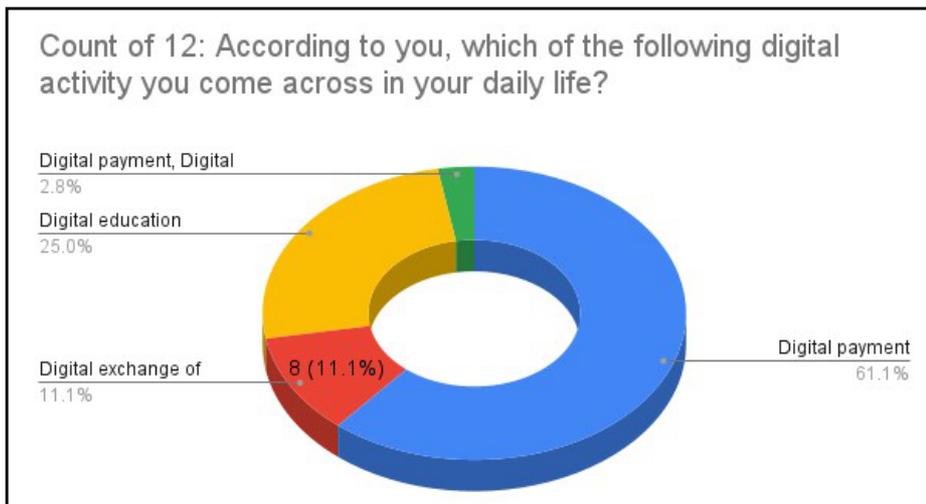
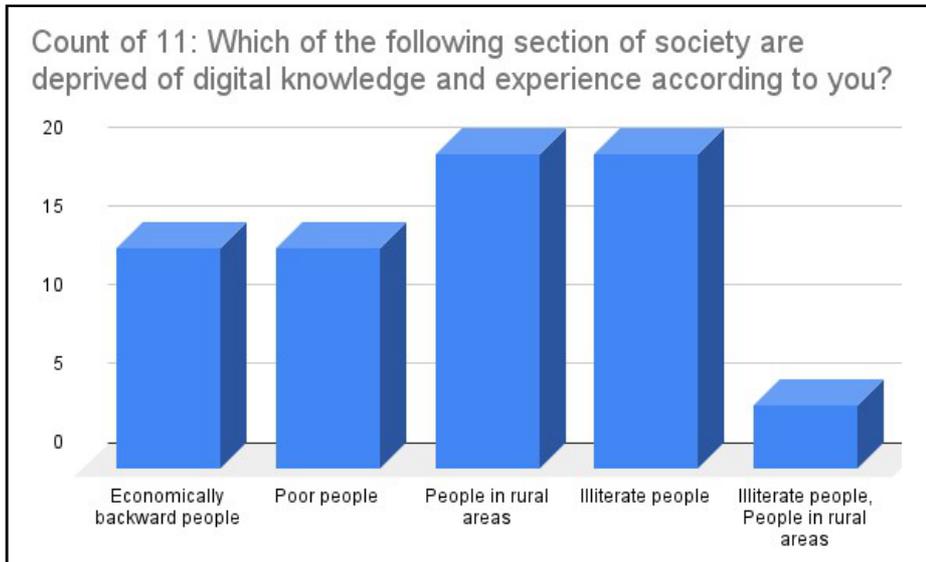


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FINDINGS

The data was collected from people having some knowledge & experience of the digital world. Of the entire population, 55.6% were post graduates, 33.3% were graduates & 11.1% of the population were under-graduate. More than 50% of the population were salaried employees whereas the rest of the respondents were divided into professionals, students & others. Also, the respondents were divided into different age groups as the study covers the entire population having digital knowledge & experience. Hence, as per the data collected, 66.7% of respondents fall under the age group of 18 to 30 years of age, 30.6% in the age group of 31 to 50 years while only 2.8% fall in the age group of 51 to 70 years of age. None of the respondents was above 70 years of age. 90.27% of respondents believe that digitalization has a greater impact on the country whereas only 9.72% believe it has no impact on the country's growth & development. 88.9% respondents have felt the

importance of digitalization in their lives while 8.3% have not come across the need for it.

When asked about digital inclusion, 62 (86.11%) respondents are aware about it while 10 (14.28%) are not at all aware of it. 44.4% of people think that digital knowledge is a prerequisite now-a-days as it makes the work quicker & faster. 25% of respondents think that it is a prerequisite because the country has adopted digitalization globally. Since the country is becoming completely digital, each one of us also has to accept it. 19.4% of people think that digitization is necessary to update oneself with new upcomings while according to 11.1% of the respondents, it has become a prerequisite to survive in this competitive world. Around 76% of the population think that going digital has brought a change in the country's growth & development. Also, when spoken about the change in digitalization era pre & post Covid 19, 86.11% of the respondents feel that digitalization has got more spark after the outbreak of Covid 19 & lockdown. Many sections of the society are deprived of digital access which consists majorly of people living in rural areas & illiterate people. Also, economically backward classes are one of them. To cope with this, teaching the illiterate ones, having good facilities & providing digital access to a large extent are some of the factors to be looked upon. According to 25% of the population, digital education occupies more space in the digital world followed by digital payment & digital exchange of information.

Therefore, with all these findings, the Null Hypothesis which is "Digital Inclusion is not needed in today's world" is rejected and the alternative hypothesis "Digital inclusion is needed in today's world" is accepted.

SUGGESTIONS

- Many respondents have suggested that the country must make digitalization mandatory which covers all the aspects of the economy such as education, purchase & sale transactions, medical facilities, tourism etc.
- If the country wants to have 100% digital inclusion, it is important for all of us to accept the ongoing digital cycle & its upgradation. For this, all the illiterate ones must be educated by creating awareness through advertisements or personal visits.
- Availability of digital gadgets, internet facilities at lesser cost & wifi access at all places can be a good move towards digital inclusion.
- A good quality technical support is what is needed to make digitalization work well.
- As digital Aadhar Authentication has already served the purpose of digitalization to a greater extent, linking to other ID proofs would be an ideal step for complete digitalization.
- Technical innovations have already changed the way of collaboration with the population. Even at a larger distance, it is now possible to communicate & collaborate with everyone just with a click. This has increased the level & way of communication. Hence, this must be trained to those people living in remote places who do not have knowledge & access to the technical innovations.

CONCLUSION

As we all are aware of the growing competition in all the sectors, being knowledgeable & experienced is the

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only way to survive & be a part of the race. For this, having complete information & knowledge of what's going on around the world is highly significant. People with in depth knowledge & competency will only be chosen in comparison with the one who doesn't possess any knowledge. Upgradation with new trends and technology becomes an essential indicator & a requisite for the smooth functioning of the economy. This makes digital knowledge a requirement for all of us in today's competitive world.

Although the covid phase has increased digitalization to a greater extent, still there are many remote areas which are deprived of digital equipment, gadgets, facilities etc. which needs to be taken into consideration if the country wants to be fully digitalized. The areas where people have lesser or no knowledge of technology must be educated by different means. Digitalization has improvised the country's growth & development in various sectors which ensures that it will have much more benefit if people continue to update & upgrade themselves with newer versions of technology. Technology has made everyone's life easy through completion of work in less time. Also, it has made people pro in downloading, using them & giving valuable feedback which is very useful for different companies. Technology has made online bookings easy with quick digital payments and lesser risk. Also, the banking sector has gained a lot of benefits with digitalization through online banking apps which helps people to transfer money anytime, anywhere & to anyone. Online activities do not require any physical infrastructure but a digital gadget such as mobile phone, laptop, tablet etc.

All these events proclaim that digitalization is very important in today's life. Hence, the Country must strive towards having complete digital inclusion which will make the economy grow & develop in all aspects at a high pace.

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