

Chapter 11

Significant Influences of Digital Literacy to Promote Gender Equity and Equality in Education: Digital Literacy Perspective

Chammika Mallawaarachchi

University of Visual and Performing Arts, Sri Lanka

ABSTRACT

This chapter shows the importance of digital literacy to enrich the concept of gender towards inequity and inequality to use digital resources. Digital resources are significant areas of the digital information economy. However, it has been observed that opportunities are given differently to genders to use digital resources that can enhance skills and knowledge. Therefore, to critically understand how gender matters in digital literacy is tested in the digital teaching environment. The study is based on quantitative research to illustrate that gender differences are the main hurdles in the learning of digital literacy. The study has found that gender differences are initiated from classroom interactions and goes up to collaborative learning processes. Finally, the research recommends that the emerging gender inequalities have to be considered critically to initiate and facilitate gender equity and equality.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-8443-8.ch011

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, digital devices are the most popular way to connect each other and users of mobile phones to access with the Internet has increased to 1.8 billion in 2014. This gigantic change in the society has enhanced the positive participation and collaboration of people in economic, social, and political empowerment. But it has been noticed that in most of the economy's women continue to lag behind men in acquiring of required knowledge and skills in digital literacy and privilege to access digital devices including the Internet. Further, it has been seen that in particularly women are novice in digital literacy and their skills are major barriers for them to harness the full potential of digital resources. However, new skills and competences are required for them like (Voogt et al, 2013) collaboration, communication, problem solving, critical thinking, creativity and productivity, so that they can contribute to the Digital Knowledge Society (DKS) efficiently.

The Digital Knowledge Society (DKS) provides ample opportunities for economic and social development of the country with robust assistance of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Many stakeholders like governments, businesses, citizens and civil society organizations are valuable assets of DKS. At the same time, now ICTs can provide abundant opportunities for females to consume digital knowledge. ICTs pushes the present society towards digitalization. Therefore, many goods and services can be accessed anytime, anywhere. For examples, e-society, e-government, e-health, e-banking, e-learning, e-commerce, and e-voting etc. So, all of these new forms of communication engagement and social and economic behavior push forward the society into digital knowledge society. In the digital knowledge society, in particularly, many practices of the society have changed by technology. So, it has been observed that digital technologies create new forms of participation and inclusion. It has improved the diverse possibilities of participation and collaboration. However, the World Development Report of 2016 has highlighted that digital dividends in the society have been increased very rapidly. It has reflected that in digital knowledge society that digital dividends are becoming broader and wider due to unequal distribution among nation and gender. For an example same report has mentioned that out of 7.4 billion people 1.1 only can access to high-speed internet connections. It has indicated that digital dividends demarcate equality among social groups. However, it is a social phenomenon that treat equally all despites of sex or gender. That is very important in the digital society because the Internet can empower men and women to enjoy equally its resources 24/7 including accurate information without any discrimination. Therefore, nowadays, one of the significant concerns is that to address gender equity and equality all over the world as one