

Digital skills amongst men and women in Bihar: Summary findings

As part of a population based survey conducted across 10 districts of Bihar from November 2024–March 2025, **65 digital skills** were measured among men and women 18–60 years of age, including members of self-help groups (SHGs) (Annex 1 contains the full listing). In the pages to follow, we summarize key findings pertaining to digital skills exploring topics ranging from the reported ability to perform select skills to the leading determinants of digital skills.

Key finding

1

Digital skills are the leading barrier to phone use among women in Bihar

Figure 1. Barriers to phone ownership among those who share a phone by gender

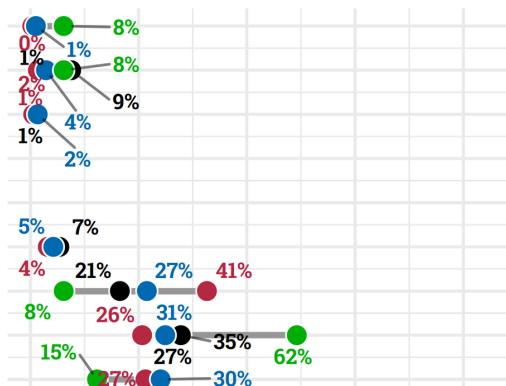
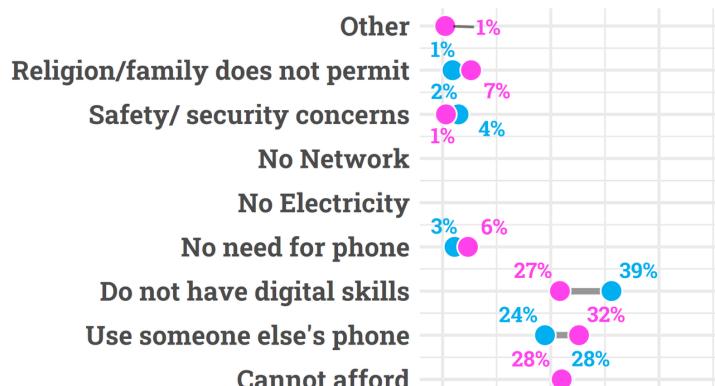
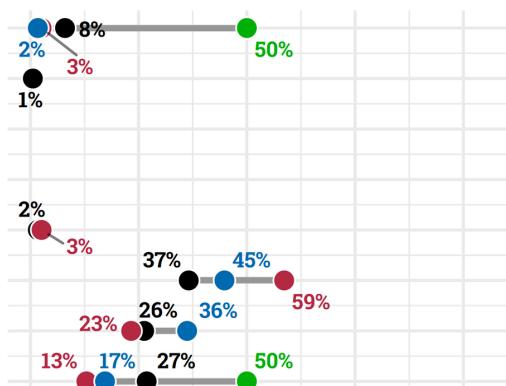
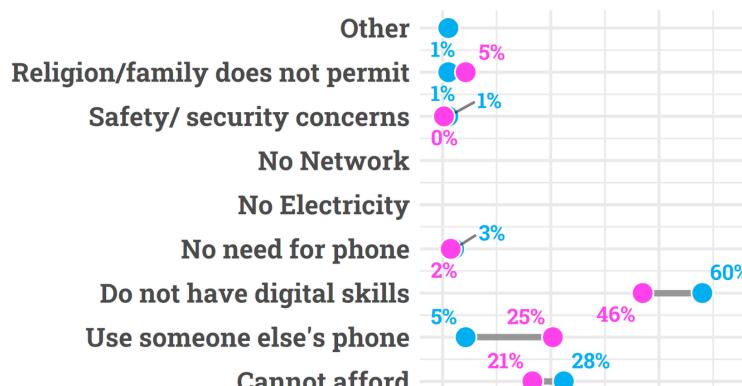


Figure 2. Barriers to phone use among those with no access



Men

Women

Non-SHG Member

SHG Member

SHG Leader

CLF Leader

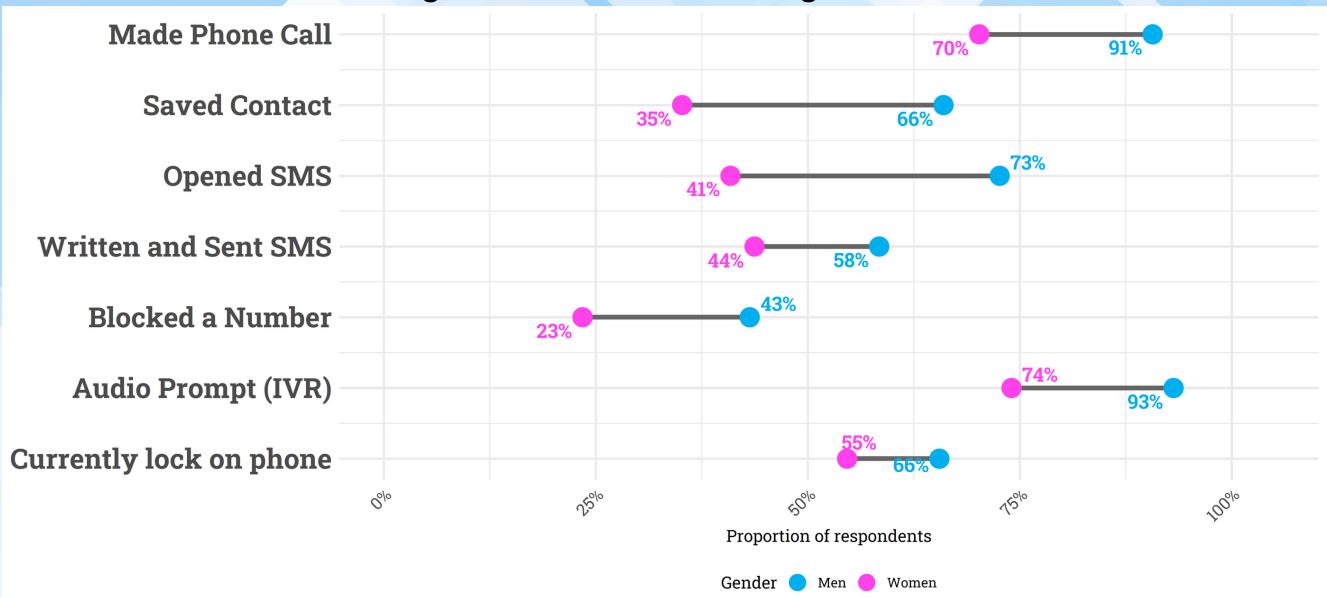
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Key finding

2

A gender gap of roughly 10 - 30% was observed in the ability to perform basic skills

Figure 3. Prevalence of basic digital skills

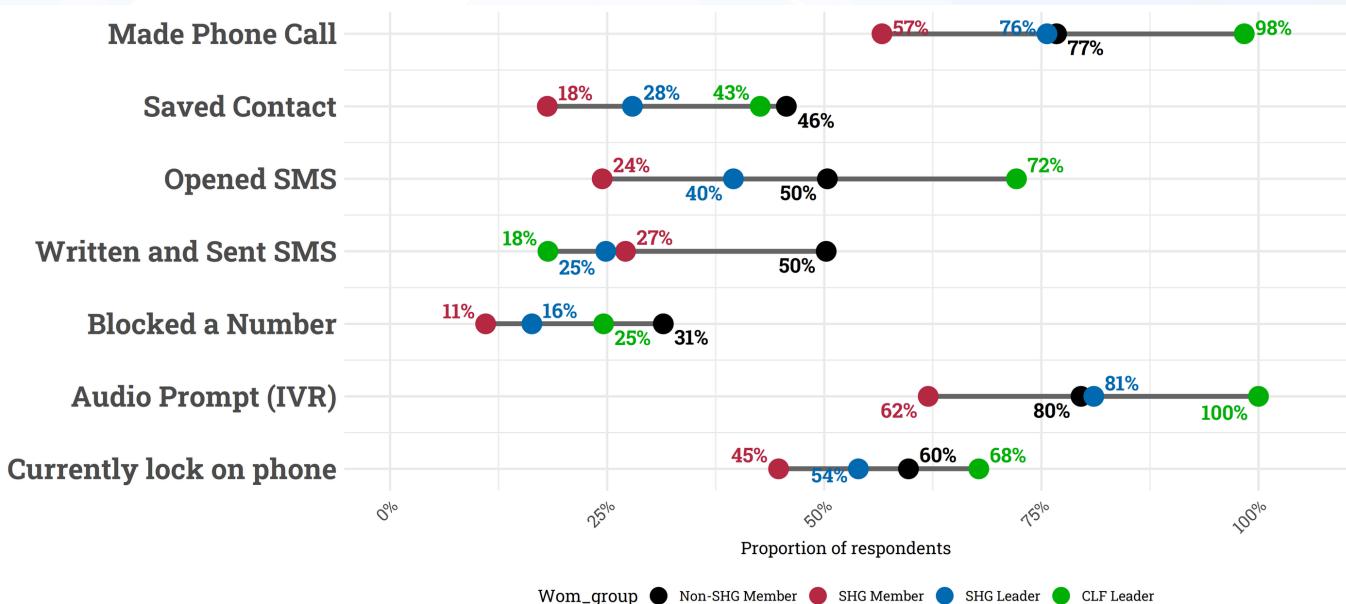


Key finding

3

Among women, SHG members have the lowest levels of basic digital skills

Figure 4. Prevalence of women with basic digital skills by SHG cadres

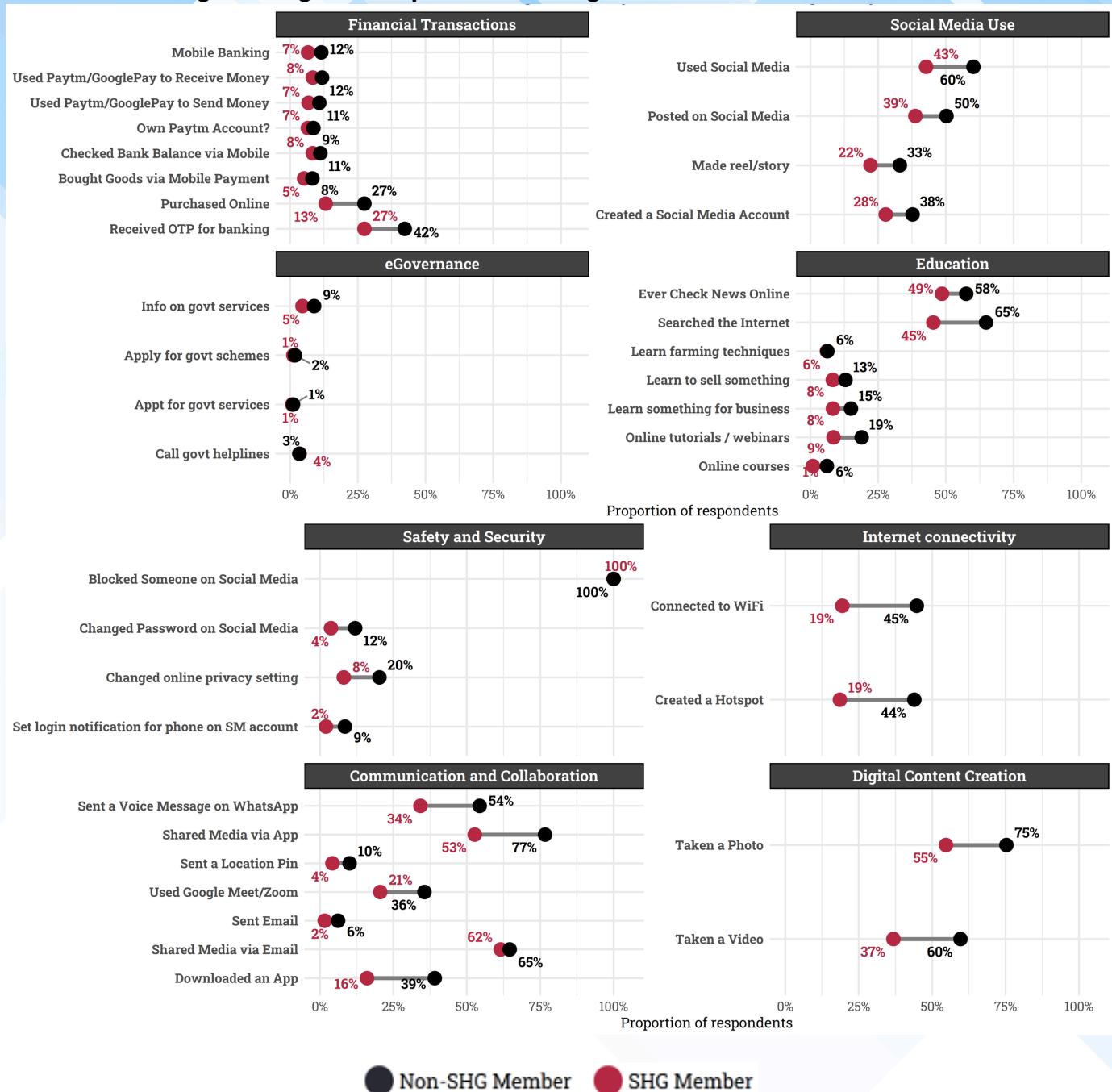


Key finding

4

Among advanced digital skills assessed SHG Members consistently have lower skills across all domains

Figure 5. Digital Skills prevalence among SHG and Non-SHG women



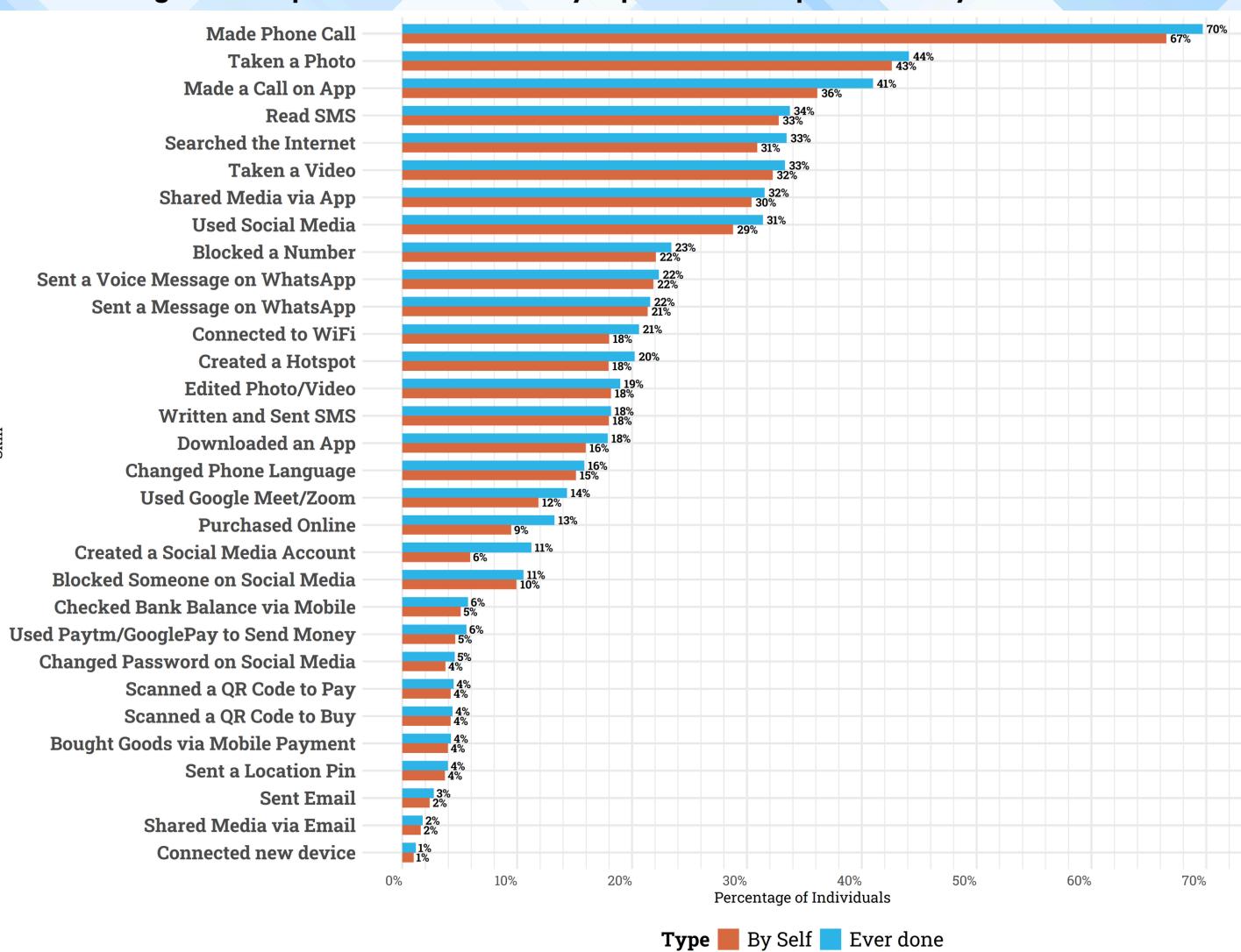
Key finding

5

Most women report being able to perform skills on their own

The below figure shows that there are very small gaps between the prevalence of the skills reported to have ever performed and that of having performed them independently the last time. This suggests that the women who report being able to perform skills can do them on their own with notable gaps being present for rarely performed skills like creating social media accounts, connecting to WiFi or online purchases.

Figure 6. Comparison of women's ability to perform self-reported skills by themselves



Key finding

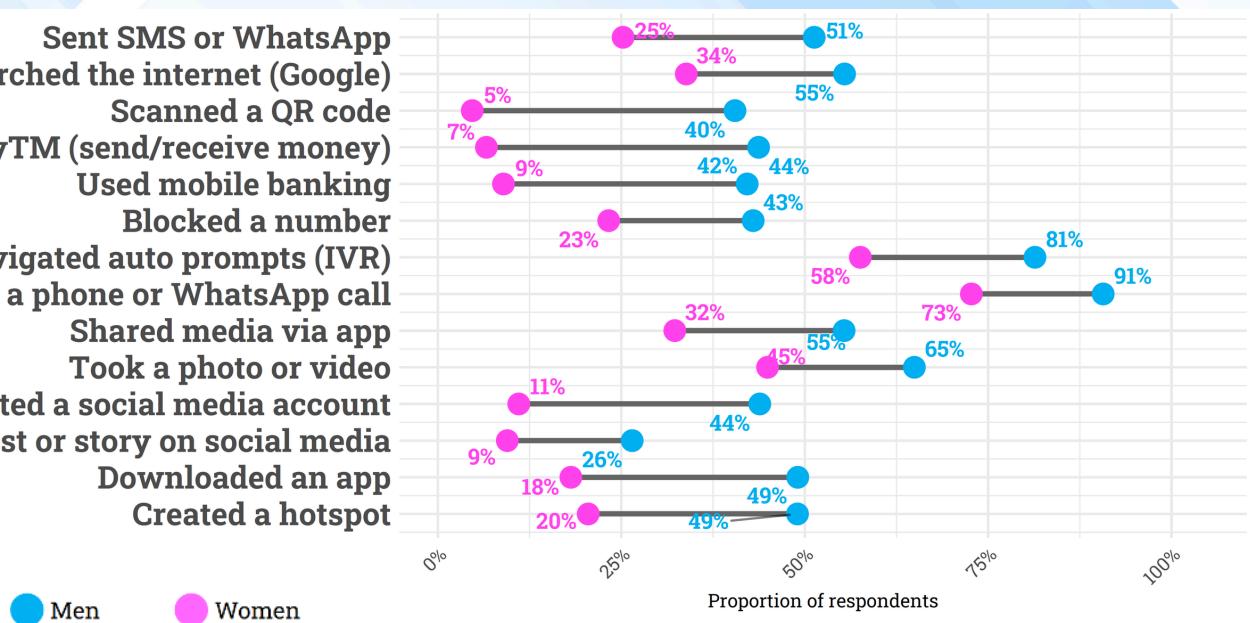
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Men are able to perform 60% of basic skills assessed as compared to 30% among women

Digital Competency Score	Men	Women	Overall
	5001	7616	12617
Min / Max	0 / 14.0	0 / 14.0	0 / 14.0
Competency Score = $x/14$ skills reported	Med [IQR] 8.0 [2.0;13.0]	2.0 [1.0;6.0]	3.0 [1.0;9.0]
Mean (std)	7.4 (5.1)	3.7 (3.7)	5.1 (4.7)

Figure 7. Digital competency among men and women

- Sent SMS or WhatsApp
- Searched the internet (Google)
- Scanned a QR code
- Used GPay/PayTM (send/receive money)
- Used mobile banking
- Blocked a number
- Navigated auto prompts (IVR)
- Made a phone or WhatsApp call
- Shared media via app
- Took a photo or video
- Created a social media account
- Made a post or story on social media
- Downloaded an app
- Created a hotspot



Key finding

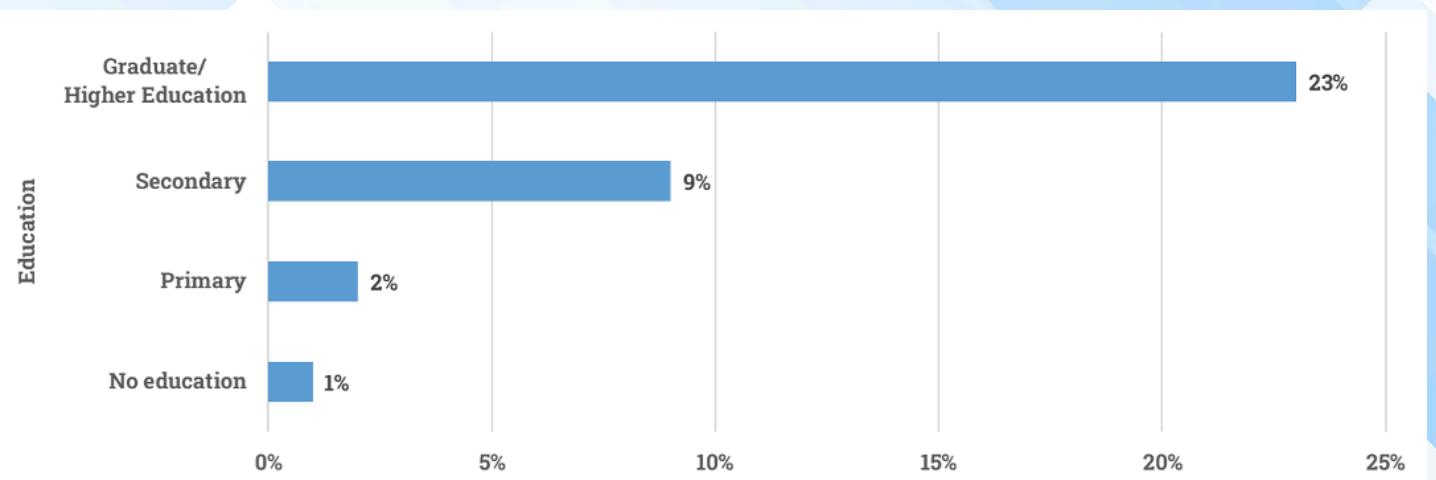
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Among women, phone ownership is the leading determinant of digital skills. Once you remove the ownership barrier, education and literacy are the leading drivers of digital skills

Of the 14 skill items included in the DAUI, the average score was between 4 to 7 among the sample population. We defined a high level of skill as those who score higher than 10 (70%) on this scale. Using a logistic regression to assess the factors associated with high digital skills score among women shows that literacy, education and age are closely linked to having higher levels of digital skills. Literate women with graduate or higher levels of education show higher odds of having high digital skills. Additionally, being older than 40 years of age slightly lowered the odds of having high skills.

These findings are consistent with the profile of those identified as high level users in the DAUI.

Figure 8. Predicted probabilities of having high skill level by education



Annex 1. Comprehensive listing of digital skills assessed

Domain	Skill	Domain	Skill
Communication - Basic	Making phone calls	Finance	Receiving money via Paytm or Google Pay
	Saving contacts		Sending money via Paytm or Google Pay
	Navigating IVR prompts		Maintaining a Paytm account
	Opening SMS messages		Checking bank balance via mobile
	Reading SMS messages		Buying goods with mobile payments
	Writing and sending SMS messages		
Communication - Internet based	Using chat apps	Finance	Purchasing items online
	Making calls on apps		Scanning QR codes to pay
	Sending messages on WhatsApp		Scanning QR codes to buy
	Sending voice messages on WhatsApp		Receiving OTPs for banking
	Sharing media via apps		Using mobile banking
	Sending location pins		
	Using Google Meet or Zoom	eGovernance	Accessing information on government services
	Opening email		Applying for government schemes online
	Sending emails		Scheduling appointments for government services online
	Sharing media via email		
	Using social media		Calling government helplines
	Posting on social media		
	Creating social-media accounts		
	Creating reels or stories		



Domain	Skill
Information and Knowledge	Searching the Internet
	Verifying information accuracy
	Getting news from websites
	Getting news from social media
	Getting news from YouTube
	Checking news online
	Searching for health information
	Learning farming techniques online
	Learning to sell products online
	Learning business skills online
	Attending online tutorials or webinars
	Taking online courses
Content and Media	Taking photos
	Recording videos
	Editing photos or videos
	Creating presentations
Safety and Privacy	Blocking phone numbers
	Blocking people on social media
	Changing passwords on social media
	Locking the phone
	Changing phone-privacy settings
	Changing online-privacy settings
	Setting login notifications for social-media accounts on phone
Technical	Copying and pasting text
	Creating formulas in spreadsheets
	Writing computer programs
	Changing phone-language settings
	Downloading apps
	Connecting new devices
	Connecting to Wi-Fi
	Creating mobile hotspots

For more information or permission to adapt this resource, please contact:

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