

Digital Media Literacy and Environmental Awareness among Women in India

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Abstract: Digital media literacy plays a significant role in shaping awareness and knowledge in contemporary society. In India, the increasing access to digital technologies has created new opportunities for women to gain information, share ideas, and participate in social and environmental discussions. This study examines the relationship between digital media literacy and environmental awareness among women in India. Digital platforms such as social media, online news portals, educational websites, and mobile applications have become important sources for spreading information about environmental issues, including climate change, pollution, waste management, and sustainable living. The study highlights how digital media literacy enables women to access, evaluate, and disseminate environmental information more effectively. Women who possess higher levels of digital literacy are more likely to engage in environmentally responsible behaviours and participate in online environmental campaigns and community initiatives. However, the research also acknowledges several challenges, including the digital gender divide, limited internet access in rural areas, and a lack of digital education. The findings suggest that improving digital media literacy among women can significantly contribute to strengthening environmental awareness and promoting sustainable practices at the household and community levels. Therefore, enhancing digital education, expanding access to digital resources, and supporting women-focused digital literacy programs are essential for empowering women and fostering environmental sustainability in India.

Keywords: Digital Divide in India, Digital Media Literacy, Environmental Awareness, Sustainable Development, Women Empowerment.

1.INTRODUCTION:

Digital media literacy has become an essential skill in the modern information society, where digital technologies play a crucial role in communication, education, and knowledge sharing (Nwogwugwu, 2022). Digital media literacy refers to the ability to access, understand, analyse, evaluate, and create information through digital platforms such as the internet, social media, mobile applications, and online media sources (Park et al., 2020). It enables individuals to use digital tools effectively and responsibly while also developing the ability to critically assess the accuracy and reliability of online information (Georgopoulou et al., 2025). In today's digital age, the growing use of smartphones and internet connectivity has made digital media an important source of information and awareness on various social, economic, and environmental issues. Environmental awareness refers to the understanding and knowledge about environmental problems and the need to protect natural resources for present and future generations (Georgopoulou et al., 2025). It involves recognizing environmental challenges such as climate change, air and water pollution, deforestation,

biodiversity loss, and improper waste management. Environmental awareness encourages individuals and communities to adopt sustainable lifestyles and responsible behaviours that contribute to environmental protection. Educating people about environmental issues is essential for promoting sustainable development and maintaining ecological balance (Timmis et al., 2016). Digital media has emerged as a powerful tool in spreading environmental knowledge and awareness. Through social media platforms, websites, online campaigns, blogs, and digital news sources, environmental information can be shared quickly and widely among different sections of society (Jeffrey et al., 2011). Digital media not only provides access to information but also encourages discussions, community participation, and activism related to environmental protection (Sullivan & Xie, 2009). Online campaigns promoting recycling, tree plantation, water conservation, and the reduction of plastic use have successfully reached millions of people and influenced positive environmental behaviours. Women play a vital role in environmental protection and sustainable practices, particularly in developing countries like India (Mahour, 2016). In many households and communities, women are responsible for managing natural resources such as water, fuel, food, and waste. Their daily activities and decisions often influence environmental sustainability at the family and community levels. Women also participate in various environmental movements, awareness programs, and community initiatives aimed at protecting nature and promoting eco-friendly practices (Raimi et al., 2019). When women are empowered with knowledge and resources, they can become strong advocates for environmental conservation. In India, digital technology and internet access have expanded rapidly over the past decade. Government initiatives such as Digital India and various digital literacy programs aim to increase digital access and skills among citizens (Kaushal et al., 2022). However, despite this progress, a significant digital gender divide still exists. Many women, especially in rural and marginalized communities, face barriers in accessing digital devices, internet connectivity, and digital education. Limited access to technology restricts their opportunities to benefit from digital information and online awareness programs. Therefore, understanding the relationship between digital media literacy and environmental awareness among women in India is highly important. Enhancing digital literacy can empower women to access reliable environmental information, participate in online discussions, and adopt sustainable practices in their daily lives (Debbarma & Chinnadurai, 2023). The purpose of this study is to explore how digital media literacy contributes to improving environmental awareness among women and to examine its potential role in promoting environmental responsibility and sustainable development in Indian society.

2.CONCEPT OF DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY

Digital media literacy refers to the ability of individuals to effectively use digital technologies to access, understand, analyse, evaluate, create, and communicate information (Livingstone, 2004). In the modern digital era, people rely heavily on digital platforms such as the internet, smartphones, social media, and online applications for information and communication. Digital media literacy helps individuals develop the necessary skills to navigate digital environments responsibly and critically (Koltay, 2011). It enables users to identify reliable sources of information, avoid misinformation, and participate actively in the digital world. For women in particular, digital media literacy can serve as a powerful tool for education, awareness, and empowerment, allowing them to access information, express their opinions, and participate in social and environmental discussions (Leaning, 2019). One of the key components of digital media literacy is accessing digital information. This refers to the ability to use digital devices such as computers, smartphones, and tablets to search for and obtain information from various online sources. It includes using search engines, visiting educational websites, accessing online libraries, and exploring social media platforms to gather information. With proper digital access, individuals can easily learn about important topics such as environmental conservation, climate change, and sustainable living (George et al., 2021). For women, especially those in rural or marginalised communities, gaining access to digital information can help them become more informed about environmental issues and solutions. Another important component is evaluating online content. The internet contains a vast amount of information, but not all of it is accurate or reliable. Digital media literacy enables individuals to analyse online content critically and determine whether the information is trustworthy, relevant, and based on credible sources (Lucaser & Acedera, 2025). This skill is essential in preventing the spread of misinformation and helping individuals make informed decisions. Women who possess the ability to evaluate online information can better understand environmental issues and avoid misleading or false content that may circulate on digital platforms. Creating and sharing digital content is also a significant aspect of digital media literacy. Digital platforms allow individuals not only to consume information but also to produce and share their own content. People can create posts, blogs, videos, and online discussions that spread awareness and encourage positive change (Ahlquist, 2014). Digitally literate women can actively help spread information about environmental protection, share sustainable practices, and encourage others in their communities to adopt eco-friendly behaviours. Various digital platforms are widely used for environmental communication. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube have become powerful

tools for spreading environmental awareness and mobilizing people for environmental causes. Blogs, online forums, educational websites, and digital campaigns also play an important role in providing environmental education and promoting sustainability initiatives. The importance of digital literacy for the empowerment of women cannot be overstated (Saini & Rana, 2025). Digital literacy enables women to access educational resources, improve their knowledge, and participate in social and economic activities. It helps them become more confident in expressing their views and engaging in community discussions. In the context of environmental awareness, digitally literate women can access valuable information about sustainable practices such as waste management, water conservation, and energy efficiency. They can also share this knowledge within their families and communities, thereby contributing to broader environmental awareness and sustainable development (Oe et al., 2022). By improving digital media literacy among women, society can empower them to become informed citizens and active contributors to environmental protection and social progress.

3.ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Environmental awareness refers to the understanding and knowledge of environmental issues and the importance of protecting the natural environment. It involves recognizing how human activities affect nature and realizing the need to conserve natural resources such as air, water, forests, and wildlife. Environmental awareness helps individuals develop a sense of responsibility toward maintaining ecological balance and protecting the environment for present and future generations.

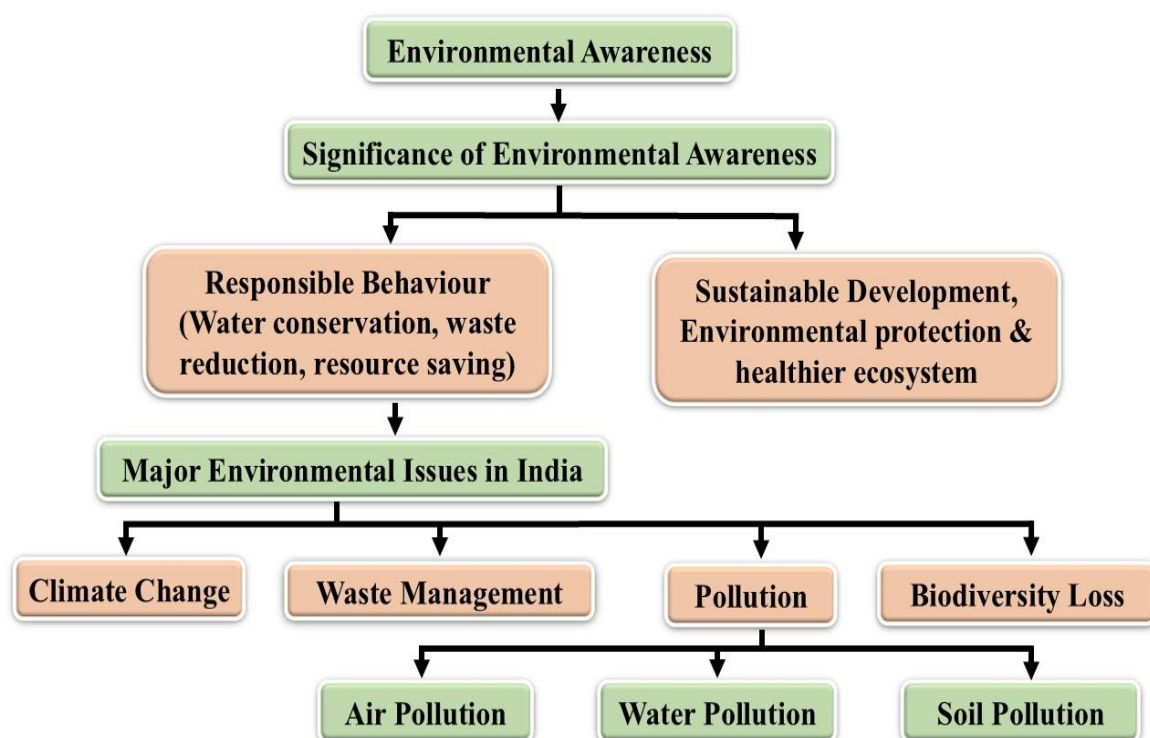


Figure 1: Environmental Awareness

4.SIGNIFICANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Environmental awareness is important because it helps people understand the impact of their actions on the environment. When individuals are aware of environmental problems, they are more likely to adopt responsible behaviours such as conserving water, reducing waste, and protecting natural resources (Takala, 1991). Awareness also encourages communities to support environmental protection policies and participate in conservation activities. It plays a key role in promoting sustainable development and ensuring a healthier environment.

5.MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN INDIA

India faces several serious environmental challenges due to rapid industrialization, urbanization, and population growth. These environmental issues affect natural ecosystems, human health, and economic development (Sadashivam & Tabassu, 2016). Some of the major environmental problems in India include climate change, pollution, waste management, and biodiversity loss.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is one of the most significant environmental issues affecting India. Rising global temperatures have led to irregular rainfall patterns, heatwaves, floods, droughts, and other extreme weather events. These changes impact agriculture, water resources, and food security in the country (Seneviratne et al., 2021). Increasing awareness about climate change helps individuals understand its causes and encourages them to adopt environmentally friendly practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Pollution (Air, Water, and Soil)

Pollution is a major environmental concern in India.

- **Air Pollution:** Air pollution is caused by vehicle emissions, industrial activities, burning of fossil fuels, and agricultural residue burning. It has become a serious health issue in many Indian cities (Kaur & Pandey, 2021).
- **Water Pollution:** Water pollution occurs when harmful substances such as industrial waste, sewage, plastics, and chemicals enter rivers, lakes, and groundwater sources. This affects both human health and aquatic life (Madhav et al., 2019).
- **Soil Pollution:** Soil pollution is caused by excessive use of pesticides, chemical fertilizers, and improper waste disposal, which reduces soil fertility and harms agricultural productivity (Saha et al., 2024).

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Waste management has become a major challenge in India due to rapid population growth and urbanization. Large amounts of household waste, plastic waste, and electronic waste are generated every day (Kumar et al., 2017). Improper disposal of waste leads to environmental pollution and health hazards. Effective waste management practices such as recycling, composting, and reducing plastic use are necessary to protect the environment.

BIODIVERSITY LOSS

Biodiversity loss refers to the decline in the variety of plant and animal species in ecosystems. In India, biodiversity is threatened by deforestation, habitat destruction, pollution, climate change, and illegal wildlife trade (Kumari et al., 2021). Biodiversity is essential for maintaining ecological balance and supporting human life. Protecting forests, wildlife, and natural habitats is therefore crucial for environmental sustainability.

ROLE OF DIGITAL MEDIA IN PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AMONG WOMEN

Digital media has become a powerful tool for spreading environmental awareness and educating people about sustainable practices. With the rapid growth of the internet and smartphones, digital platforms provide easy access to information and enable individuals to participate in discussions and campaigns related to environmental protection. For women, especially in developing countries like India, digital media offers opportunities to learn about environmental issues, share knowledge, and engage in activities that promote sustainability. Through various online platforms, women can gain information about environmental problems, understand their impact, and adopt eco-friendly practices in their daily lives.

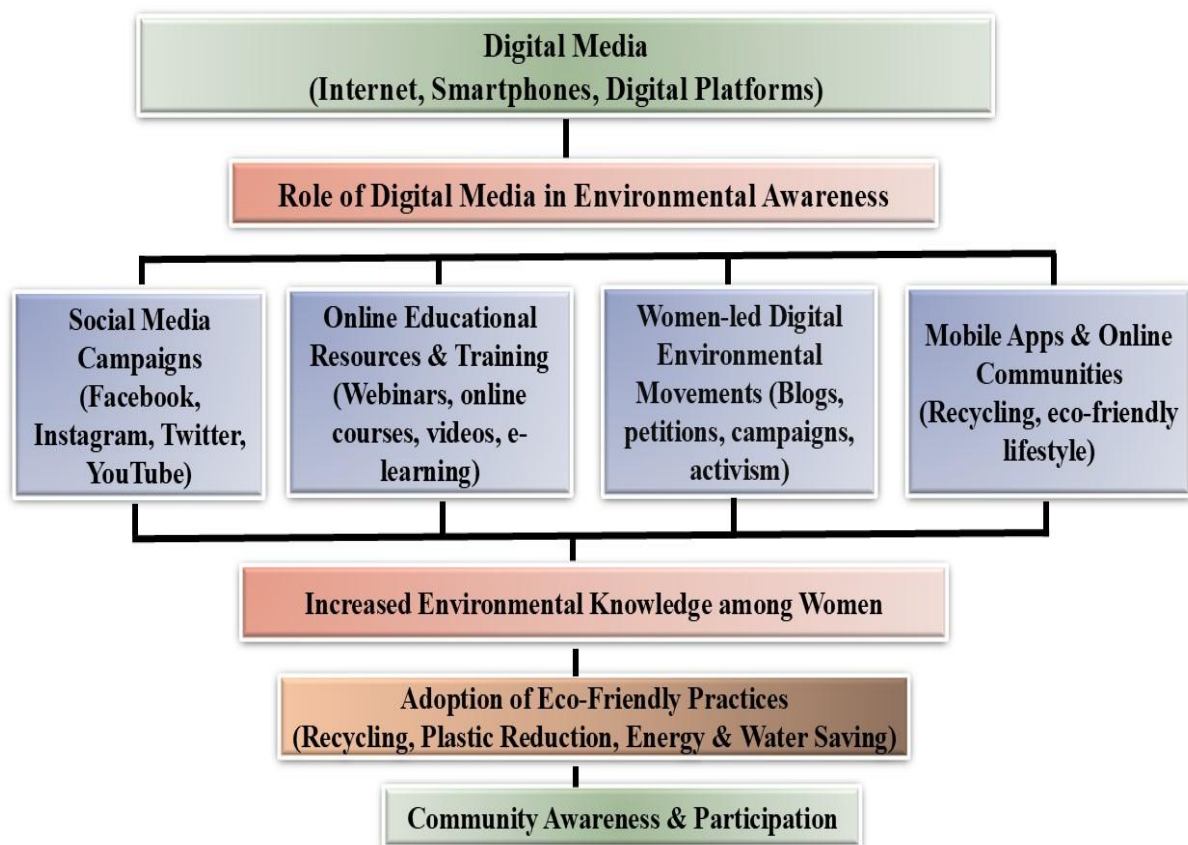


Figure 2: Role of Digital Media in Promoting Environmental Awareness among Women.

6.SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube play a significant role in raising environmental awareness. Many organizations, activists, and communities use social media to run campaigns related to climate change, plastic reduction, water conservation, and tree plantation (Kaur & Chahal, 2018). These campaigns spread information quickly and encourage people to take action. Women who actively use social media can learn about environmental issues, participate in discussions, and share awareness messages within their communities. Social media campaigns also motivate women to adopt environmentally responsible behaviors such as reducing plastic use, recycling waste, and conserving natural resources (Odunlami & Aro, 2024).

ONLINE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL TRAINING

Digital media provides access to a wide range of online educational resources related to environmental protection. Websites, online courses, webinars, videos, and digital learning platforms offer valuable information about climate change, biodiversity conservation, sustainable agriculture, and waste management (Ambe et al., 2024). These resources help women improve their knowledge and understanding of environmental issues. Online environmental training programs organized by educational institutions, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations also help women develop practical skills related to sustainability and environmental management (Bokayev et al., 2024).

WOMEN-LED DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS

Digital media has enabled women to take leadership roles in environmental activism and awareness campaigns (Ekezue, 2025). Many women activists and community leaders use digital platforms to organize environmental movements, raise awareness about ecological issues, and encourage collective action. Through blogs, social media posts, online petitions, and digital campaigns, women can bring attention to environmental challenges and advocate for sustainable solutions. Women-led digital movements not only empower women but also inspire communities to participate in environmental protection activities (Kakade et al., 2024).

USE OF MOBILE APPS AND ONLINE COMMUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Mobile applications and online communities have also become important tools for promoting sustainable practices. Various apps provide information about recycling, waste management, energy conservation, and eco-friendly products. Online communities and discussion forums allow women to share experiences, exchange ideas, and learn practical ways to live sustainably. These digital platforms create a supportive environment where women can collaborate, gain knowledge, and encourage each other to adopt environmentally responsible lifestyles (Lidia et al., 2018).

Overall, digital media plays a crucial role in enhancing environmental awareness among women by providing access to information, encouraging participation in environmental campaigns, and supporting the adoption of sustainable practices. By improving digital literacy and access to technology, more women can become active contributors to environmental protection and sustainable development.

IMPACT OF DIGITAL MEDIA LITERACY ON ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOR

Digital media literacy plays an important role in shaping people's attitudes and behaviors toward the environment. When individuals have the ability to access, understand, and evaluate information through digital platforms, they become more informed about environmental issues and the importance of sustainable practices. For women in India, digital media literacy provides opportunities to learn about environmental challenges, share knowledge, and participate in activities that promote environmental protection (Lu et al., 2024). As women become more digitally literate, they are better equipped to make informed decisions that positively influence environmental behavior within their households and communities.

INCREASED KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Digital media literacy enables women to access a wide range of information related to environmental problems and solutions. Through online news, educational websites, social media posts, and environmental blogs, women can learn about issues such as climate change, pollution, biodiversity conservation, and waste management (Robelia et al., 2011). This increased access to information helps them understand the causes and consequences of environmental problems and the importance of protecting natural resources. As their knowledge increases, women become more aware of the need to adopt environmentally responsible behaviors.

7.ADOPTION OF ECO-FRIENDLY PRACTICES

One of the major impacts of digital media literacy is the encouragement of eco-friendly practices in daily life. By accessing online information and awareness campaigns, women can learn practical ways to reduce environmental harm. These practices may include reducing plastic use, recycling household waste, conserving water and energy, planting trees, and using environmentally friendly products. Digital media often provides tips, tutorials, and community initiatives that inspire individuals to adopt sustainable lifestyles. Women who are digitally informed can apply these practices at home and influence other family members to follow environmentally responsible habits (Robelia et al., 2011).

PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM AND CAMPAIGNS

Digital media literacy also encourages women to participate in environmental activism and awareness campaigns (Hrei et al., 2024). Social media platforms allow individuals to support environmental causes, share information, and participate in online discussions related to environmental protection. Women can join digital campaigns promoting climate action, plastic reduction, and wildlife conservation. They can also support environmental organizations by sharing awareness messages, signing online petitions, or participating in community events. Such participation helps strengthen collective efforts toward environmental conservation (Lestari et al., 2025).

COMMUNITY AWARENESS THROUGH DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Digitally literate women can play an important role in spreading environmental awareness within their communities. By sharing information through social media, messaging platforms, and online groups, they can educate others about environmental problems and sustainable solutions (Georgopoulou et al., 2025). Women often act as key communicators within families and local communities, and their ability to use digital media effectively can help spread environmental knowledge to a wider audience. This community-level awareness can encourage collective action and promote environmentally responsible behaviour among larger groups of people (Kaur & Chahal, 2018).

Overall, digital media literacy has a positive impact on environmental behaviour by increasing knowledge, encouraging sustainable practices, promoting participation in environmental campaigns, and spreading awareness within communities. Empowering women with digital literacy skills can therefore contribute significantly to environmental protection and sustainable development.

8. STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Improving digital media literacy and environmental awareness among women requires well-planned strategies and collaborative efforts from different sectors of society (George et al., 2021). By strengthening digital education and promoting environmental knowledge through digital platforms, women can be empowered to participate actively in environmental protection and sustainable development (Kakade et al., 2024). The following strategies can help enhance digital media literacy and environmental awareness among women in India.

Expanding Digital Literacy Programs for Women

One of the most effective strategies is to expand digital literacy programs specifically designed for women. Many women, particularly in rural and marginalized communities, still face challenges in accessing digital technologies and learning digital skills (Koltay, 2011). Government initiatives, community training centers, and non-governmental organizations can organize digital literacy workshops and training programs that teach women how to use smartphones, computers, and the internet effectively (Livingstone, 2004). These programs can help women gain confidence in using digital platforms to access information, communicate, and participate in online activities related to environmental awareness.

Integrating Environmental Education with Digital Training

Another important strategy is to integrate environmental education into digital literacy training programs. When women learn digital skills, they can also be introduced to environmental topics such as climate change, pollution control, waste management, and sustainable living practices (Saini & Rana, 2025). Combining digital training with environmental education will allow women to use digital media as a tool for learning and sharing environmental knowledge. Online learning modules, educational videos, and digital awareness campaigns can help women understand environmental issues and encourage them to adopt eco-friendly practices (Nwogwugwu, 2022).

Promoting Women-Led Online Environmental Initiatives

Encouraging women to lead online environmental initiatives is also an effective way to promote awareness and participation (Raimi et al., 2019). Women can use social media platforms, blogs, and digital communities to share information about environmental protection and sustainable practices. Women-led digital campaigns, awareness programs, and online discussions can inspire others to take action for environmental conservation. Supporting women leaders in digital environmental activism can strengthen community involvement and increase the visibility of environmental issues.

Overall, implementing these strategies can help bridge the digital gender gap, improve environmental awareness, and encourage women to take an active role in protecting the environment. By empowering women with digital skills and environmental knowledge, society can move toward a more sustainable and environmentally responsible future.

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9. CONCLUSION: In conclusion, digital media literacy plays an important role in increasing environmental awareness and promoting sustainable behaviour among women in India. With the rapid growth of digital technologies and internet access, digital media has become a powerful tool for spreading environmental knowledge and encouraging people to participate in environmental protection activities. This study highlights that women play a crucial role in environmental protection and sustainable practices, especially at the household and community levels. Digitally literate women can also spread awareness within their families and communities, participate in environmental campaigns, and contribute to collective efforts aimed at protecting natural resources. Looking toward the future, digital media has great potential to

further enhance environmental awareness and sustainability. As digital technologies continue to expand, more women will have opportunities to access online information, educational resources, and environmental training programs. By promoting digital literacy initiatives, supporting women-led environmental campaigns, and strengthening collaboration among governments, NGOs, and educational institutions, digital media can become an even more effective tool for environmental education and activism. Empowering women with digital knowledge and skills will not only improve their participation in environmental protection but will also contribute to building a more sustainable and environmentally responsible society for future generations.

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