Making Rural Women Digitally Capable: Examining NGOs' Role in Enhancing Rural Women's Digital Equity in Selected Region of Uttar Pradesh

PROJECT BRIEF -Tender Document / Request for Proposal (RFP)

Project Type	Collaborative Research Project under Vision Viksit Bharat@2047 – Special Call
Funding Agency	Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), Ministry of Education, Government of India
Host Institution	Birla Institute of Management Technology (BIMTECH), Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh
Sanctioned Grant	₹12,00,000
Project Duration	January 28, 2025 – October 31, 2025
Duration of Assignment for Agency	30 working days
Estimated commencement date	August 15st , 2025
End Date	September 15th 2025
Location	Uttar Pradesh
Research Team	Dr. Veenu Sharma (Principle Investigator), Dr. Prabina Rajib, Dr. Shreya Mishra, Dr. Shalini Singh, Dr. Ashutosh Kumar, Ms. Kadeeja Nourah

Project Overview

This ICSSR-funded research project aims to examine the role of NGOs in promoting digital equity among rural women in selected districts of Uttar Pradesh. With India pushing forward its Digital India agenda, a significant digital divide still persists in rural areas—particularly among women. NGOs have been at the forefront of enabling digital access and inclusion at the grassroots level. This project identifies, documents, and evaluates such interventions to understand their effectiveness and the barriers they face.

Objectives

Project Objectives
• To identify NGOs' role in reducing the digital divide.
• To examine major challenges faced by NGOs in implementing digital inclusion.
• To identify the role and effectiveness of NGO-led interventions.
• To assess rural women's access to digital tools and platforms.
• To measure the gender digital divide in selected districts of Uttar Pradesh.
• To understand social, emotional, and infrastructural barriers to digital inclusion.
• To create a benchmark for evaluating project impact in later stages.

Methodology:

The project adopts a multi-case study approach involving:

- In-depth interviews with NGO founders, staff, and rural women beneficiaries.

- Focus groups with stakeholders, experts, staff of NGO and Rural Panchayat and Beneficiaries

- Analysis of publicly available documents such as annual reports and impact assessments.

- Survey of control and experimental group of rural women beneficiaries, NGO workers

- Ethical field observations in NGO-led digital literacy sessions.

Significance:

This research contributes to both academic and policy discourse on digital equity, aligning with India's *Vision Viksit Bharat@2047*. It recognizes NGOs as crucial actors— not merely data sources—but partners in development who's on-ground insights and models can be replicated or scaled.

Scope of Work

The selected agency will be responsible for:

- Identification of NGOs and interviews of NGO leaders, field workers and beneficiaries

- Conducting **surveys** across **rural locations** in Uttar Pradesh selecting areas for control groups and experimental groups where NGOs are working

- Administering questionnaires designed by the project team for beneficiary survey and creating questionnaire for NGO workers

- Collecting Qualitative data through interview and focused group discussions

- Recruiting and training field investigators/Enumerators

- Ensuring data quality through supervision and field-level quality checks

- Submitting clean, coded, and verified data in Excel/SPSS format

- Submitting summary report of data collection (dates, locations, field team size, challenges)

Tasks and Responsibilities (Customized for ICSSR Project)

The agency/consultant, will be responsible for the following tasks and deliverables as part of the ICSSR-funded study titled *"Making Rural Women Digitally Capable: Examining NGOs' Role in Enhancing Rural Women's Digital Equity in Selected Region of Uttar Pradesh."*

1. **Inception Report:**
   An inception report will be prepared and submitted to ICSSR. This will include:

   1.1. Data collection tool development

   1.2. Identification of 5 NGO's working on the topic

   - Finding the NGO's and as the Pilot study with the controlled group and the experimental group

   1.3. Plan for Pilot Survey and Sampling Strategy

   - Checking and testing of the tool- Pretesting

   - Brief findings report

   - Additions or changes in the tool after Pilot testing if any

   - The same person or team should do the pilot test again if revisions are done in the initial tool

   1.4. Pilot survey report

   1.5. Sampling strategy and sample size – Expected sample size-750

   1. Village Selection using Treatment–Control Framework

   • Select two sets of villages:

   a) Treatment Villages where NGOs are actively working on digital empowerment,

   b) Control Villages with similar socio-economic profiles but no NGO presence.

   • This purposive village selection is critical for minimizing confounding variables and enabling quasi-experimental comparisons.

   2. Stratified Sampling of Respondents

   • Within each village, respondents should be selected using stratified sampling to ensure representation across:

   o Education levels

   o Caste/Social categories

   o Household income levels

   o Mobile and internet access

   • This will ensure diversity and comparability in both treatment and control groups.

3. Sample Size and Balance

- Ensure that the number of respondents is balanced between treatment and control groups.

- Maintain adequate sample size to support statistical matching and valid inference using PSM.

1.6. Plan for Field Work

1.7. Fieldwork timelines and logistics

1.8. Data collection tools report

1.9. Data analysis

2. **Primary Data Collection:**
Field visits will be conducted in selected districts of Uttar Pradesh. During this phase:

2.1. In-depth interviews will be conducted with NGO founders (expected no. 5-10), field staff (intermediaries) (expected no. 10-15), and rural women beneficiaries (expected no.20-30)

2.2. Focused Group Interview should be conducted NGO staff

2.3. Conducting Quantitative Survey with both Control group (who didn't digital training with NGO's) (expected no.750) and Experimental groups (Who are beneficiaries of training of NGO's) (expected no.750).

2.4. Limited support may be requested from NGOs for administering survey questionnaires among the beneficiaries.

2.5. Field notes and Key findings

3. **Ethical considerations and consent procedures and Audit trail (documention)**

3.1. Raw and cleaned datasets

- Data should be delivered in digital Excel format for the Survey

- Data should be delivered in both Word and Excel format for the Interview

- The transcript of the Interview should also be Provided in Word Format

3.2. Scanned signed consent forms from NGO's

3.3. Fieldwork summary report

3.4. Audio/video recordings/ Photographs

- Require high quality (HD) photographs of Field Surveys, Focus Groups, Interviews
- Require clear audio recording of Interviews, Focus groups

3.5. Signed declaration of data confidentiality

3.6. Final completed report of the project

3.7. The Enumerators data – Work log, attendance and hours worked in the field

3.8. The Receipt of Payments for Enumerators

4. **Final Report**

4.1 Report of the data analysed

4.2 Detailed description of the findings from survey and qualitative data

4.3 Summary of the findings

Time line for Deliverables

Deliverables Required(as mentioned above)	Time Expected
1. **Inception Report**	**Within 1 week**
2. **Primary Data collection**	**Within 2-3 Weeks**
3. **Ethical considerations and consent procedures and Audit trail (documentation)**	**Within 3-4Weeks**
4. **Final Report**	**Within 4 Weeks**

Payment Milestones Against Deliverables (ICSSR-Aligned)

All payments will be made in accordance with ICSSR guidelines and subject to satisfactory completion and submission of deliverables by the project team. The following schedule shall apply:

Deliverables / Outputs	Estimated Duration to Complete	Target Due Date	Payment %	Review and Approvals Required
Product 1: Payment upon submission and	Within first week	20th Aug, 2025	15%	Approval by the technical team

acceptance of Inception Report				
Product 2: Payment upon submission of Full data Collection Report	Within 2 weeks	30th Aug, 2025	35%	Approval by the technical team
Product 3: Payment upon submission and acceptance of Draft Report	After 3 weeks	9th Sep, 2025	25%	Approval by the technical team
Product 4: Payment upon submission and acceptance of Final Report	By end of assignment	15th Sep, 2025	25%	Approval by the technical team

Note: All payments will be processed to timely submission of deliverables, utilization certificate, and financial statements as per ICSSR norms.

Required Skills and Experience

The Agency of Consultancy is expected to demonstrate the following qualifications and expertise to successfully execute the study:

- Experience in conducting social science research and worked with similar NGO's for data collection.

- Prior experience working with or studying **non-governmental organizations (NGOs)**

- Familiarity with academic reporting standards, especially in line with **ICSSR expectations** for deliverables and financial documentation.

- Preference will be given to researchers with experience in **intersectional analysis**, digital literacy programs, or gender-based field interventions.

- Given the limited budget, preference will also be given to candidates who can work within modest financial constraints.

The total duration for the data collection is **30 days**, starting from **15th August 2025 to 15 th September 2025**. A detailed schedule of deliverables is outlined below to ensure efficient progress monitoring and timely submission to ICSSR.

Activities	Consultancy Days	Deadline	Week 1 (Aug 1–7)	Week 2 (Aug 8–14)	Week 3 (Aug 15–21)	Week 4 (Aug 22–28)	Week 5 (Aug 29–Sep 4)	Week 6 (Sep 5–11)	Week 7 (Sep 12–15)
Questionnaire development for NGO intermediaries	2	17 Aug, 2025	X						
Pilot Survey	8	23 Aug, 2025	X						
Submission of inception report	7	30 Aug, 2025		x					
Sampling and field work	8	7 Sep, 2025		x	x	x			
Data processing and analysis	5	12 Sep, 2025					x		
Submission of draft report	1	13 Sep, 2025						x	
Validation meeting	1	14 Sep, 2025						x	
Final report and dissemination	4	15 Sep, 2025							X

Ethical Considerations, Confidentiality, and Proprietary Rights

- All research activities under this ICSSR-sponsored project shall adhere to **standard ethical research principles**, including:

  o Informed consent of participants

- o Voluntary participation

- o Confidentiality and anonymity of respondents

- o No harm or coercion in field interactions

- o Respect for cultural, gender, and community sensitivities

- The research team shall **not disclose or publish** any proprietary or sensitive data, including individual statements or internal NGO documents, without prior written consent of the project coordinator or the respective stakeholder.

- All data, tools, reports, and materials produced under this project will remain the **intellectual property of ICSSR and the host institution (BIMTECH)**. Unauthorized use, distribution, or publication of any material is strictly prohibited without explicit written approval. This prohibition extends to, but is not limited to, the use of any project data, findings, or derived materials for the consulting agency's promotional activities, marketing collateral, case studies, or any form of public dissemination, even with acknowledgment, without explicit prior written approval from BIMTECH.

- Publications or public dissemination derived from the study must acknowledge ICSSR funding and follow ICSSR's norms for authorship, acknowledgment, and reporting.

How to Apply

Agencies with prior experience in baseline surveys, gender research, or rural development studies are invited to submit their proposals for field investigation services under the ICSSR project titled:
"Making Rural Women Digitally Capable: Examining NGOs' Role in Enhancing Rural Women's Digital Equity in Selected Region of Uttar Pradesh."

Submission Format:
Interested agencies must submit a detailed **technical and financial proposal**, including:

1. Organization profile and registration documents

2. Relevant prior experience (especially ICSSR/GOI/academic/research studies)

3. Proposed team composition and bios of key personnel

4. Understanding of the scope and suggested fieldwork plan

5. Financial quotation (separately sealed or PDF-labeled)

6. GST and PAN details

Submit to

registrar@bimtech.ac.in

Last Date for Submission: 6th August 2025
Only shortlisted agencies will be contacted for further discussion

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12. Approval Authority

This Terms of Reference (ToR) is issued under the ICSSR-funded research project and approved by:

Name:
Designation:
Institution:

Signature: _____
Date: _____