

# Possibilities of Empowerment of Women in Oman through Digital Means

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**Abstract:** Digital empowerment of women is the process of enhancing women's abilities and skills using technology so they can contribute to the economy and society. This research examines how digital technology might improve Omani women's access to education, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities, highlighting the benefits and challenges of this empowerment. Finding the factors that have led to Omani women's success and analysing how they use digital technologies to empower themselves both personally and professionally are the objectives of the study. By combining statistical analysis, qualitative and quantitative research, and a review of the literature, the study investigates how women in Oman use digital technology. To advise platform providers, educators, and the business community on how to promote women's support and digital inclusion, it looks at recent studies and current models.

Along with successful examples of digital empowerment, the research discusses the challenges women have in accessing and effectively using technology. For Omani women, this article provides useful recommendations for enhancing digital empowerment to advance gender equality and sustainable economic growth. To support this empowerment, it also calls for additional government funding and neighbourhood initiatives.

**Keywords:** *Digital Empowerment, Women's Skills, Educational Opportunities, Employment, Entrepreneurship, Gender Equality, Sustainable Development, Gender Equality, Sustainable Development, Government Support, Community Initiatives.*

## I. INTRODUCTION.

The digital age has transformed businesses and societies worldwide, giving people additional opportunities to participate in social and economic

activities. Digital empowerment initiatives addressing historical gender inequity might significantly benefit women, particularly in developing nations. In Oman, a country undergoing rapid technological and social transformation, empowering women through digital means is a primary objective. National initiatives such as Oman Vision 2040, which prioritizes diversity and technological innovation, reflect this. (*Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit*, n.d.). **"Empowering women is key to social transformation and economic growth," notes a report by the World Bank<sup>1</sup>**. This study investigates how Omani women use digital tools and platforms to dismantle traditional barriers, resulting in more participation in the workforce, education, and community leadership (Paquibut, 2021).

Oman's strategic policies and initiatives, like the National Digital Transformation Strategy, which highlights technology as a crucial element of the nation's economic diversification efforts, demonstrate the country's commitment to digital transformation. Women now have far more opportunities in business, education, and employment thanks to these programs. Long-standing barriers have also been removed by digital platforms, empowering women to start businesses, access resources, and significantly improve their communities. The UN Sustainable Development Goal 5, which promotes gender equality and women's empowerment, and other

international frameworks are congruent with this emphasis on women's empowerment. Over 70,000 women are currently enrolled in higher education because of Oman's digital initiatives, which have had a significant impact on women's education. Access to digital resources has facilitated women's participation in the labor market and contribution to the knowledge economy, which has improved their personal and professional development (Varghese, 2011).

Despite these great advancements, Omani women still face many obstacles to fair internet access, especially in rural and low-income areas. Cultural norms and societal expectations that restrict women's use of digital technology compound the large digital divide caused by differences in internet access and digital literacy. Targeted interventions are needed to address these issues, such as increasing internet speed, offering specialized training in digital literacy, and fostering a creative culture. Women can now engage in e-commerce, access international markets, and support economic diversification thanks to digital empowerment. Oman's strategic initiatives, like the National Digital Transformation Strategy, support female entrepreneurs and underscore their increasing significance to the nation's economic development (Gender, 2017).

Digital empowerment promotes societal inclusion and equity in Oman, in addition to benefiting businesses. Through social media and digital platforms, women are taking part in public discourse and decision-making at a growing rate. The importance of digital participation in attaining gender equality was acknowledged by the UN. Oman's efforts to close the gender gap in technology are evidence of its commitment to digital transformation. Women's access to digital resources and opportunities has increased significantly thanks to initiatives like the National Digital Strategy and focused seminars. Through training programs like "Makeen," which offers courses in artificial intelligence, data science, and software development, the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and

Information Technology (MTCIT) promotes technical skills (Muscat Daily Posts, 2023).

Despite significant advancements, Omani women still face obstacles to equitable internet access, especially in rural and underdeveloped areas. The differences in digital literacy and internet access point to a large digital divide that is shaped by deeply embedded social norms and cultural standards. Customized interventions, such as expanding internet infrastructure, offering specialized digital literacy programs, and creating an environment that encourages creativity, must be put into place to address these issues. Women can now actively engage in e-commerce, access international markets, and support the nation's economic diversification thanks to digital empowerment. The National Digital Transformation Strategy and other government initiatives in Oman are essential for encouraging female entrepreneurship and highlighting the increasing economic significance of women in the workforce. However persistent issues like the divide between rural and urban areas and ingrained cultural norms prevent digital empowerment from reaching its full potential. To address more general social issues like community development, healthcare, and environmental sustainability, digital empowerment is essential. As stated by the UN, "digital inclusion is essential for achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls" (Bridging the Gender Divide, n.d). Digital health initiatives also greatly benefit women by providing them with access to vital health information and services, which enhances individual and family well-being.

Digital empowerment is critical for tackling social issues including healthcare, environmental sustainability, and community building. Women with digital abilities can use digital health initiatives to improve their own and their families' well-being. (Mackey & Petrucka, 2021). As former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated, **"Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family"**. (Mackey & Petrucka, 2021). In Oman,

digital empowerment encompasses not just personal growth, but also social progress and resilience. Women with digital skills not only improve their lives but also help to diversify the national economy. Women entrepreneurs are extending their enterprises using platforms such as e-commerce, while others are advocating for social change through online activism (*How We Can Supercharge an Equitable Digital Future*, 2023). This cascade effect underscores the need for inclusive policies and continued investments in digital infrastructure to promote women's empowerment on a broader scale (Dionisio et al., 2023).

In conclusion, women's digital empowerment in Oman is revolutionary, advancing social inclusion, economic engagement, educational attainment, and societal advancement. Through the use of technology and digital tools, Omani women are changing the game and advancing the country. Digital empowerment for women will continue to be a vital part of Oman's inclusive and sustainable economic strategy as it works to realize its Vision 2040 goals. Investing in digital empowerment is a strategic requirement for creating a resilient and successful society, not just something to do with equity. Oman is leading by example in the region by promoting women's use of digital media. (Chaudhry, 2021) The main query could be this: What are how digital women in the e-commerce sector have profited from the media? In what ways can social media aid Omani women in obtaining employment online, and how can new media foster entrepreneurship?

This research examines the role of technology in empowering women in Oman, with a focus on the challenges they confront in education, entrepreneurship, and the workplace. It underlines the digital divide and the paucity of technology-related opportunities in various areas. The study uses quantitative survey data to analyse women's internet access and literacy. Secondary data from academic publications, government documents, and international organizations were analysed to contextualize the findings and identify trends. The

mixed-methods approach provides a comprehensive picture of how women interact with digital technologies, how they impact their lives, and the issues they face. The findings underscore the need for culturally appropriate and inclusive programs that enable all women to use technology for both personal and professional growth. This report adds to national programs like Oman Vision 2040, which stresses gender equity and inclusion, by making specific suggestions for improving digital literacy and access. Furthermore, it contributes to our knowledge of how digital empowerment might promote long-term development and social progress in Oman by analyzing the transformational impacts of technology on women's life and their ability to overcome societal and infrastructure barriers.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Digital empowerment is critical for furthering global development objectives, notably in Oman, where it coincides with Vision 2040's goals of gender equality and diversity through technology innovation. Such projects support women's socioeconomic engagement in a historically conservative community by increasing their access to technology and digital capabilities. According to Oman Vision 2040, "Technology will be a tool for inclusivity, fostering opportunities for all citizens irrespective of gender or location." Despite major infrastructural improvements, gaps in internet access persist, particularly in rural regions. The World Economic Forum believes that digital technologies can empower women by giving them access to information, education, and economic opportunities, emphasizing its relevance in fostering fair development.

**"digital technologies have the potential to empower women by providing access to information, education, and economic opportunities,"** (Chaudhry, 2021). emphasizing the importance of this empowerment in creating inclusive growth and allowing women to fully participate in society and the economy. Given its links to gender equality, technological innovation, and national development goals, this problem is

critical for both local and global transformation. (Chaudhry & Paquibut, 2021).

A comprehensive literature review necessitates the critical evaluation and selection of trustworthy sources from academic journals, official government publications, and trustworthy news sources. One article that was cited in the Journal of Middle Eastern Women's Studies, for example, focuses on how digital literacy programs have affected women's empowerment in the Gulf (Journal of Middle Eastern Women's Studies). (*UN Women Rapid Assessment Tool to Evaluate Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Results in Humanitarian Contexts*, 2024). The Ministry of Technology and Communications in Oman has also released studies on government efforts to reduce the gender gap in digital technology. Oman's Ministry of Technology and Communications (Varghese, 2011). Another significant source is the study "Women Empowerment through Micropreneurship in Online Businesses in the Sultanate of Oman," (bitwize.com.lb, 2024). which examines how young Omani women balance conventional duties with using social media for business. The study "Women Entrepreneurship in Oman - Possibilities and Challenges"(Chaudhry, 2021). also looks at the potential and limitations of Omani women who work for themselves, focusing on issues like a lack of business networks, financial resources, and entrepreneurial motivation (Women Entrepreneurship in Oman - Possibilities and Challenges). Selecting a range of peer-reviewed publications guarantees a balanced perspective. "Evaluating the credibility of each source strengthens the foundation of a literature review," according to Grad Coach (2023) (Grad Coach). The literature study can offer a thorough and nuanced picture of the digital empowerment of women in Oman by combining these diverse sources (Amzat et al., 2017). **"Female business leaders place continuous learning and improvement very high on their agendas and are promoting a similar mindset within their teams through training opportunities, international assignments, and ongoing**

**mentorship." (Women in UAE and Oman Lead AI Adoption, 2024)**

Digital empowerment projects have gained traction in the Middle East, with nations like Oman making substantial efforts to incorporate women into the digital economy. The Omani government has developed many projects to improve women's digital literacy and increase their engagement in the technology sector. Despite these efforts, ingrained cultural norms and limited access to resources continue to prevent women in the region from fully reaping the benefits of digital empowerment (Paquibut, 2021). Oman has established several regulations and efforts to encourage women's digital empowerment. The Digital Oman Strategy, often known as eOman, is a notable program that aims to enhance digital literacy and expand ICT usage throughout all segments of society, with a special focus on women. Furthermore, the Ministry of Social Development launched the 'Tamkeen' project, which aims to economically empower women by developing digital skills and supporting online businesses. While these initiatives have had significant results, additional personalized interventions are needed to address the unique obstacles that women experience (Paquibut, 2021).

Despite advances, considerable impediments to women's digital empowerment still exist in Oman. Cultural conventions and cultural expectations often limit women's access to technology and digital education. Furthermore, there is a significant digital divide between cities and rural areas, with women in rural areas having limited access to digital tools and services. Overcoming these issues will need a comprehensive approach that includes legislative reforms, community involvement, and increased investment in digital infrastructure (Liloia, 2022).

Digital empowerment has the potential to greatly improve the socioeconomic situation of women in Oman. Women who learn digital skills are better positioned to develop in their professional professions, launch entrepreneurial initiatives, and



fully engage in the digital economy. According to research, women who are adept in digital technologies are more likely to contribute to household income and achieve greater financial independence, which can result in broad social and economic advantages for their communities and the nation (Morrell & Tandon, n.d.).

Future studies should concentrate on systematically identifying and resolving the unique hurdles to digital empowerment encountered by women in Oman. This includes an in-depth look at how education, access to technology, and cultural variables influence women's digital participation. Furthermore, more thorough data on the effectiveness of digital empowerment projects is required to drive evidence-based policy and program development. Bridging these research gaps would allow Oman to improve its efforts towards gender equality and women's empowerment through digital methods.

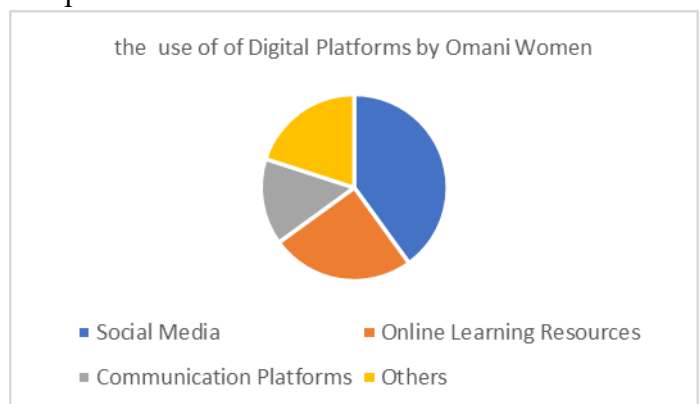
### III. METHODOLOGY

By combining quantitative and qualitative data, this study employs a mixed-methods approach to examine women's digital empowerment in Oman. Surveys were used to evaluate the degree of digital literacy, the frequency of technology usage, and the uses of technology in business, education, and career development. To put findings into perspective and spot trends, secondary data from scholarly publications, government publications, and international organizations were examined. The report also looks at other successful digital empowerment projects, assesses the efficacy of existing initiatives, and suggests ways to spread digital literacy and inclusion.

### IV. FINDINGS:

The results of the survey show the advantages and disadvantages of Omani women's digital empowerment. In Oman, social media, online learning resources, and communication platforms are

utilized by about 80% of women. As of 2023, the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) of Oman reported that 96.4% of its citizens had internet access. According to DataReportal (2023), this usage is consistent with a high level of connectivity. Even with this high level of accessibility, only 45% of survey participants said that digital technologies were greatly assisting them in advancing their careers or education. Among the obstacles noted were low levels of digital literacy, high internet service costs (cited by 50% of respondents), and ingrained cultural norms that discourage women from pursuing careers in the digital sector or starting their businesses. These results support the Ministry of Technology and Communications (MTC) of the Omani government, which has expressed concerns about the persistent gender gap in the tech and digital sectors despite the country's progress toward digital transformation (Ministry of Technology and Communications, 2023). These findings are supported by secondary data from academic publications that show how women's socioeconomic status may be improved by having access to technology and digital literacy. For example, a study conducted in 2011 by Varghese discovered that Omani women are increasingly using digital platforms for business and education, which has enhanced their ability to make decisions and assisted them in becoming financially independent.



This pie graph demonstrates how Omani women use digital platforms. Social networking is the most popular platform, accounting for 40% of users, followed by online learning resources (25%), communication platforms (15%), and other platforms 20%.

Category	Percentage (%)	Explanation
The use of digital platforms by Omani women	80	80% of Omani women utilize digital platforms such as social media, online learning resources, and communication tools, demonstrating the extensive use of digital technology.
Effects of Digital Technologies on Career and Educational Advancement	45	Despite their ubiquitous use, just 45% of poll respondents believe digital technology help them advance in their careers or education.
Barriers caused by high internet service costs	50	Despite broad availability, 50% of respondents felt that high internet service costs are a significant barrier to fully reaping the benefits of digital empowerment.

Table I. Summary of Survey Results on Digital Empowerment of Omani Women

Table 1 highlights the main barriers to digital empowerment faced by Omani women. High internet service costs affect 50% of respondents, 30% have insufficient digital skills, and 20% are hampered by cultural expectations

## V. Discussion:

The discussion focuses on the ways that digital technology might help and hinder Oman's women's empowerment. Cultural and societal standards, along with financial and infrastructure limitations, continue to impede full digital inclusion, even while digital technology has opened new avenues for social contact, employment, and education. An assessment of Oman's present initiatives indicates that more comprehensive and fair digital literacy programs are needed. The suggestions, which are based on effective initiatives throughout the globe, include enhancing digital literacy instruction, modernizing

internet infrastructure, and enacting legislation to encourage digital inclusion. By eliminating these barriers, Oman will have more access to the potential of digital technology to promote gender equality and empower women. The current state of digital empowerment is clarified by secondary data from scholarly journals, official government publications, and international organizations. These sources also highlight excellent practices that might be adjusted for the Omani context. For example, the OECD's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) study highlights the need of addressing gender-based discrimination in social institutions to improve women's access to digital resources (OECD Development Centre, 2023). Furthermore, Chaudhry and Paquibut (2020) talk about how young Omani women are using social media for microbusiness despite obstacles like social media marketing expertise and market access.

## VI. Limitations:

Understanding the many limitations of this study is essential. First, certain biases including social desirability bias and recall errors brought on by using self-reported survey data might compromise the validity of the findings. The data's generalizability may be further diminished by the survey sample size and the ethnic variety of the respondents, rendering them less representative of Oman's female population. The fast development of digital technology presents an extra difficulty since the gathered data may suddenly become obsolete due to newly created tools and technologies.

## FutureScope:

Future studies should avoid these constraints by using longitudinal study designs to track changes in digital empowerment across time. It might be possible to make the results more broadly applicable by expanding the sample size and including a more representative and varied group of women from different socioeconomic backgrounds and locations of Oman. Employing mixed methods approaches, such as combining focus groups or qualitative

interviews with quantitative surveys, may yield deeper and more complex understandings of the difficulties and issues women encounter in the digital sphere. Additionally, future research should assess the efficacy and long-term effects of certain digital literacy initiatives and programs on women's empowerment. Studies comparing Oman to other nations in the region may also provide insightful viewpoints on effective tactics and best practices for digital empowerment, which might help shape practice and policy in this field.

### Conclusion:

Through government efforts like Oman Vision 2040, which aims to improve digital infrastructure and literacy, Oman has made considerable strides in fostering digital empowerment for women. Significant obstacles still stand in the way of complete gender inclusion in the digital sphere, notwithstanding these developments. Physical, financial, and cultural obstacles still prevent Omani women from making the most of internet platforms. These obstacles include the high expense of digital tools, the lack of access to technology in rural regions, and enduring gender prejudices that prevent women from entering the IT sector. Oman must expand and tailor computer literacy programs for women, particularly those living in underserved regions, to effectively address these challenges. Offering women the resources they need to engage in digital learning, entrepreneurship, and the workforce should be the focus of these sorts of programs. Policies that are gender-responsive and address socioeconomic and cultural obstacles must also be created to provide equitable access to digital resources. International organizations, the corporate sector, and the governmental sector must work together to advance an inclusive digital environment. These partnerships should focus on attracting women to digital entrepreneurship, providing mentorship opportunities, and reducing the cost of technology. Addressing these structural barriers can help Oman create an environment that allows women to participate fully in the digital economy. By enabling

women to seize digital opportunities for social and economic advancement and to contribute to the nation's progress, a comprehensive approach to digital inclusion would ultimately foster long-term development.

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