

Household-level readiness towards digitalisation: Evidence from the Estate Sector in Sri Lanka

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Digitalisation is crucial in providing high-quality, efficient public services across various ethno-socio-economic groups. As per the 2025 budget speech, the government of Sri Lanka is in the process of promoting digitalisation in harnessing its potential. The success of the digitalisation drive will depend on many factors. Among them, the household-level ICT environment is critical. It is imperative to assess the readiness for digitalisation at the household level so as to identify necessary interventions for faster ICT adoption. This research aims to develop a composite index to measure the readiness towards digitalisation in the estate sector in Sri Lanka. By employing the cluster sampling technique, the study selected the Concordia estate in Nuwara Eliya for the field survey. Accordingly, a structured questionnaire was administered to 420 households. This study employed the composite index developed by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for measuring digitalisation readiness. This composite index measures digitalisation readiness through three dimensions, namely, access to existing ICT use and IT devices, usage of digital and web platforms for individual work, and IT skills and know-how. As per the data, the average index score is 0.38, while it ranges from 0.11 to 0.88, implying that the level of digitalisation readiness remains considerably low. Nevertheless, digitalisation readiness among young and middle-aged individuals remains relatively high compared to their counterparts in higher age groups. Moreover, educated individuals are more digitalisation oriented, where they often use the existing digital contents of the private and public sectors. E-governance facilities are limitedly used due to poor technical and human responses. In addition, e-payment facilities are often underutilised due to a lack of trust in product quality and delivery. The majority of individuals have not obtained any formal IT-related training, and therefore have limited digital self-defence. Evidence suggests that tailor-made interventions are required in promoting digitalisation in the estate communities.

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