



Digital Inclusion Dynamics in Rural South Sudanese Communities: An Exploratory Qualitative Study

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Abstract

Digital inclusion in rural communities of South Sudan is a critical yet underexplored area within African Studies. There exists a significant digital divide affecting access to digital technologies and their associated benefits, particularly among marginalized populations. This exploratory qualitative study employed semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with local residents, community leaders, and ICT professionals in four rural districts of South Sudan. Data were analysed using thematic content analysis to identify common themes. Interviews revealed that while there is a growing interest in digital services among the rural population, limited access to electricity and internet hinders widespread adoption. Community leaders highlighted the need for local training programmes to bridge this gap. The study underscores the importance of tailored digital inclusion strategies that address infrastructure limitations and community needs. Recommendations include enhancing energy supply and developing localized ICT education initiatives. Develop a comprehensive energy policy to ensure reliable electricity supply in rural areas. Implement targeted training programmes for local communities to improve digital literacy and service uptake. digital inclusion, South Sudan, rural communities, technology adoption, qualitative study

Keywords: *Ruralism, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Participatory Action Research (PAR), Digital Divide, Community Development, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Ethnography*

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