The importance of women-led digital solutions

Why in news?

The theme for International Women's Day 2023 is 'DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality', since women are left behind in knowledge of digital skills and access to technologies.

Which areas required women led digital solutions?

- **PM POSHAN** – Under the scheme, 3 million cook-cum-helpers play a critical role in preparing and providing hot, cooked meals to millions of school children.
- Nutritional improvement through the mid-day meals scheme is inextricably linked with food safety.
- Unsafe food served in schools has the potential to create a vicious cycle of disease and malnutrition, impacting school children who eat these meals.

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in partnership with the Governments of Odisha and Rajasthan has rolled out technology-based training modules.

- **Digital literacy & food security –** The National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5) indicates that 54% women and 64% children in India's urban areas are *anaemic*.
- In a pilot on financial literacy and digital literacy being implemented by the WFP with women *self-help groups* across low-income groups, nearly 70% of women wanted to acquire new skills.
- The women in training will be able prioritise access to financial services, manage their own economic activities efficiently, take informed decisions on their livelihoods, food security, & nutrition.
- **Gender-responsive approach –** India accounts for *half the world's gender digital divide* given that only a third of all Internet users in the country are women.

In Asia-Pacific, India has the widest gender gap of 40%, with Less than 32% of women in India own a mobile phone compared to over 60% of men.

- **NFHS-5 –** It shows that more than 18% of women between 15 and 49 years have a low

body mass index while more than half the pregnant women in the same age group are anaemic.
- Access to digital literacy and platforms would create awareness about the gap and needs in the populations that are often on the margins of the digital revolution.

What is the way forward?

- The women led digital solutions will infuse fresh energy and confidence in how women perceive and deliver their roles as nutrition champions.
- Women can harness digital tools for improving nutrition schemes and initiatives, while also using them to create economic opportunities that ensure long-term food and nutrition security.
- The need for inclusive technology and digital education is essential for a sustainable future.

Reference

1. The Hindu | The importance of women-led digital solutions

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