

# Digital financial literacy yet to reach rural areas: Study

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**Ahmedabad:** After the demonetization in November 2016, digital payment channels became a buzzword as mobile payment gateways and online payments reported a sharp spike. But did the wave also affect the rural areas? A study conducted by the faculty members of Gujarat National Law University (GNLU) in three villages revealed that more than 92% of the population opted for in-person transactions.

The study by assistant professors Garima Goswami and Anu Mishra, was one of the 16 projects undertaken by GNLU in the year 2017-18 from the grant provided by the state government. The researchers had chosen Aslali in Ahmedabad, Olpad in Surat and Dabhoda in Gandhinagar for the study. The research found that more efforts are required to penetrate

## 87 GNLU students placed

GNLU officials said that 87 out of 110 students who sat for the placements in 2018 for integrated UG programme in law have got campus placements. While 49 opted to work for law firms, 19 got picked by corporate or financial institutions, nine by lawyers' chambers or for litigation. Others charted different path with deciding to work with regulatory authority, policy makers, PSUs, teaching or studying further on fellowships.

the rural areas by creating awareness about the modes of payment and services available. The researchers also pointed out youths were more responsive towards using IMPS or mobile wallets for payments. The number of responsive males was much higher compared to the number of females.

While over 55% showed willingness to switch to digital payment modes in Dabhoda and Olpad, in Aslali only 25% agreed to do so. The researchers also suggested women-centric awareness drives, inclusion of fi-

ancial literacy in school curriculum and reaching out to the workplace for financial literacy. Professor Bimal Patel, director of GNLU, said that they attempted to bridge the gap between academic research and real-life issues. "Some of the topics covered by the projects include intellectual property rights (IPR) awareness, social entrepreneurship, climate-smart agriculture, biodiversity, international child custody disputes, law of the sea, criminal justice system and functioning of tribunals among others," he said.