ICT and Women

Neeraj Kumar Rai

Assistant Professor

Govt.Girls Degree College, Dhindhui, Patti, Pratapgarh

Abstract: The evolution of recent forms of technologies and creative sorts of technical programs makes the lives of the people better and extra comfortable in several ways. Information technologies united with the power of knowledge can enable women in developing countries to join the battle for social, economic and political empowerment. Constraints of Indian women over the ages are patriarchy, social pressures, caste based femininity and restrictions, insufficient access to productive resources, scarcity and powerlessness. The paper is based secondary sources.

Key Word: ICT, Women, Small Business, Local Knowledge, Job Opportunities.

It is universally accepted truth that information technology offer immense opportunities for development of economical, social and educational development of the people. Women empowerment is an important part for the overall national development. In 2019 male to female ratio was, 930 females per 1000 males and in absolute terms, India has 48.20% female population compare to 51.80% male population. Hence huge women population is living in India and women empowerment is most important challenge in India. As women have a very significant contribution of Indian economy and social system, women's empowerment is centred on expanding their control to take over decisions that shape their lives, including in relation to access to resources, participation in decision-making and control over conveyance of benefits. They are actively involved in education, sports, politics and any other field but the rate of women empowerment is not as per the expectation compared to developed countries. The world Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), held in 2003 in Geneva, saw ICTs as crucial tool for women's empowerment: "We are committed to ensuring that the Information Society enables women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society and in all decision-making processes. To this end, we should mainstream a gender equality perspective and use ICTs as a tool to that end"

ICTs are constantly hailed as one of the most effective tools for economic progress. It consists of various hardware, software, internet and media used for collection, storage, processing of the data and transmit information in the form of data, voice, text, images etc. Information technology offers time and space which are very valuable resources for women especially in developing countries who suffer from limited availability of the time, social isolation and lack of assess of knowledge and productive resources. It is considered crucial that the improvements in our society benefit all citizens. No single group should be

ignored or favoured. The only way is "to make it better for all". There is potential for ICTs to eliminate gender inequality and to empower women in society. An ITU study (2005) describes ICTs as potentially powerful development enablers. They are cost-effective with significant transformative power, allow developing countries to leapfrog several stages of the development process and, in furnishing individuals directly with tools for self-empowerment, and avoid top-heavy and corrupt bureaucracies. ICTs can enhance the functioning of markets that are critical for the well-being of the poor.

In Indian society there occurs an extraordinary difference in the matter of economic resourcefulness between a man and a woman. Our society is male subjugated both economically and socially and women are always dispensed with dependant role. A nation that does not esteem its women cannot be designated as a civilised nation at all. Such a nation cannot grow and develop. Thus, the national consensus should focus on betterment of women by befittingly empowering them. Empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps individuals to gain control over their lives. Women empowerment commonly refers to the process by which women increases their power to take control over decisions that shape their lives, including in relation to access to resources, partaking in decision making and control over dispersion of benefits. In the field of communication sector many women are involved but in a much convoluted way and very few have achieved positions at the decision-making level or serve on governing boards and bodies that sway media policy. The lack of gender sensitivity in the media is shown by the failure to eradicate the gender-based stereotyping that can be found in public and private local, national and international media organizations.

The female population is exposed to more discrimination than their male counterparts in economic, education, health and social services access worldwide. On the other hand the range of women's economic activities in emerging countries is very broad. It embraces formal sector and informal sector employment, as well as self-employment in farming, trading and crafts production etc. The women have multiple options to score themselves in the economic activities in the field of trade, governance, education, health, crafts, employment through ICT. ICT brings lot of openings to women in the work situations and small business. Teleporting, flexi time and work from home arrangements are some of the gender magnitudes of ICT's usages.

In the last three decades, ICT is been extensively used in numerous educational and developmental applications. The diversification of current socio-economic scenario has also changed the ICT needs of the women in the new globalize environment. Considering women, as a monolithic group will over simplify their information needs. The globalisation has generated the haves and the have not's within women's group itself, i.e. those who are in a valuable position due to globalisation and those relegated further into disadvantaged position under the new economic policy. The information needs also varies accordingly whereas within the women's group, the needs fluctuate accordingly. The urban women have generally been categorised in the following ways along with the ICT need.

Urban educated women need information on: Educational & research opportunities, Career advancement facilities, Employment prospects in India and abroad, Fashion and market values, Health and child care facilities, Art and entertainment, Social support system for working women, Legal rights and provisions.

Urban lower middle class women need information on: Educational facilities and opportunities, Career advancement and job opportunities, Inexpensive health and childcare, Inexpensive social support systems, Legal rights and provisions against social injustice, domestic violence.

Poor urban women may need information on: Free health services and child care facilities, Job opportunities in the low paid informal sector including domestic services, Housing availability especially in slums, free educational facilities, information regarding government programmes for poor.

Thus, the various sectors where the ICT is much required can play a foremost role in women empowerment. But to implement this in the routine work is not possible till the e-governance and ICT strategies and policies become transparent and accountable. To orient this procedure in the different sectors, ICT project planning and implementation for social development and gender equality must take place in a context which comprises of five main components:

(a) Creating an environment which supports and inspires strategies to indorse women's equal access to and opportunity to benefit from ICT projects, as well as creating a regulation and policy environment which backings women's use of ICTs;

(b) Developing content which speaks to women's concerns and replicates their local knowledge, and which is of value for their daily lives, business enterprises, and family responsibilities;

(c) Backing augmented representation of women and girls in scientific and technical education, and using ICTs to promote their amplified participation in education at all levels;

(d) Promoting amplified employment in the IT sector for women.

(e) Executing e-governance strategies which are accessible to women.

Women empowerment generally refers to the process by which women enhances their power and capacity to take control over decisions that changes their lives, including in relation to access to resources, participation in decision making and control over distribution of benefits. A nation can progress only when it can ensure the capacity building and empowerment of women at all level and throughout the population. To make possible this concept, the preconditioning of gender sensitivity must prevail and be strengthened at all levels. Along with this another important association of women's development is inextricably with technology. Thus in a global perspective, the more vital and greater role is of technological intervention. It's potential to sweep across political, geographical, economic and social barricades are just the leverage that women need to build for themselves a new distinctiveness and a more honourable place in society. As per the social and religious taboos in India, women have restricted access to technologies. But the recent experiences are enough to prove that that when women are trained properly and are aware, they show commendable and noteworthy understanding and control in using technologies. In Indian population, the women comprise a large portion of the rural region and play a significant role in every aspect of this sector. But still in a number of productive actions, their involvement is commonly overlooked. They are particularly involved in looking after rural are related works, for example the animal husbandry, principally dairying. The women who are doing these chores have stated their helplessness in looking after cows, diagnosing several diseases and providing instantaneous care. The reasons cited were their unawareness of current veterinarian care, on the one hand, and the lapse of outmoded methods of care on the

other. Barriers to engendering knowledge networking processes with the inception of ICT and convergence technologies, it is possible to bring up a significant fraction of women communities in a more symbiotic digital network which focuses on localized information and customized solutions, and works on the theme of Global Technologies for Local Use. Women, however, are still very much in a minority among the beneficiaries of knowledge networking. Women still face huge imbalances in the ownership, control and regulation of these new information technologies, similar to those faced in other areas.

Governments and civil society organizations have still not entirely absorbed the comprehensive potential of ICT in gender development and therefore are far from the stage of generating enabling frameworks and spaces for the growth of engendered ICT -models. The new technology comes at a financial cost, which obstructs its infiltration to the individual and community level. The difficulty is compounded by the fact that women in developing countries have little switch over the household income and do not have the decision-making power to capitalize in these technologies. The availability of ICT in these countries is therefore skewed towards the urban areas and women in rustic areas constitute one of the main marginalized groups. Instigating knowledge networking processes and benefiting from them entails a level of capacity and trained human resource power. Women because of their backward positions are at deprived position than men to fully benefit from knowledge networking. The use of English language among the poorest communities is not properly understood because of the lack of formal education. This makes the combination of local knowledge of women with the universal knowledge a difficult task.

Conclusion: The women of India is generally engaged in numerous chores such as household daily work, agricultural work as well as child health, nutrition, prevention and cure of common diseases, employment opportunities etc. Emerging a dynamic and relevant content for rural women continues to remain as a major challenge. Adequate resources need to be allocated for this activity, if profits from resources invested in connectivity and hardware have to be copiously realized. The need of the hour is to display a positive will to attain that much needed purpose.

References:

1. Morgan, S., Heeks, R., & Arun, S. (2004). Research ICT-based enterprise for women in developing countries: A gender perspective. Retrieved November 2, 2006.

2. Karen Eggleston & Robert Jensen & Richard Zeckhauser, 2002. "Information and Communication Technologies, Markets and Economic Development," Discussion Papers Series, Department of Economics, Tufts University 0203, Department of Economics, Tufts University.

3. V. Nath, ICT enabled knowledge societies for human development, Information Technology in Developing countries, 2000

4. Soumitro Chakravarty "Women's Empowerment in India: Issues, Challenges and Future Directions", International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities Vol. 5, No. 1 (2013), pp. 154-163.

5. Department of Women & Child Development Ministry of HRD Government of India submitted a report on "Enhancing Women Empowerment through Information and Communication Technology".

6. Arivanandan, M. (2013), "Socio-Economic Empowerment of Rural Women through ICTs",International Journal of Rural Studies, Vol. 20 No. 2, October, pp. 1-7.

7. Prasad P.N., Sridevi V., (2007), Economic Empowerment of women through information technology: A case study of Indian State, Journal of International women studies, 8(4), 106-120.

8. Nidhi Tandon, Shannon Pritchard, Victoria Savelieva, Racquel G. Smith & Erich Vogt., "A bright future in ICT opportunities for a new generation of Women" International Telecommunication Union, Geneva Switzerland, Telecommunication Development Sector, 2012.

9. Pathak .P (2020) Women Empowerment through ICT: Reshaping the future in (ed.book)Social Media: Issues and Challenges, Avon Publishing House,Delhi