

The Role of ICT in Women's Empowerment in Rural Areas of Tamilnadu with Special Reference with Kaur District

K. Malarkodi and K. Ramprathap*

Abstract--- Women affects from various discrimination, and it is thought this is heightened due to a lack of access to information. Information communication and technology (ICT) is a potential tool that can reach rural women and enrich their knowledge. This Study discusses women's empowerment in terms of perceptual change in rural areas of Karur District after ICT intervention has been introduced. The study was undertaken in Karur district, Tamil Nadu with the sample size of 100 women who are in the rural areas. Data has been collected through questionnaire which was later evaluated using AMOS (Analysis Moment Structure) software to validate the conceptual framework. The variables taken for the study is 1. Purpose of Use & Level of Access of ICT tool, 2.Gained Skills and knowledge from the ICT tool and 3.Women empowerment. The variables Purpose of Use & Level of Access and ICT Tool have positive impacts on Gained Skills and knowledge with the beta values of 0.33, 0.511 respectively. Gained Skills and knowledge have positive influence on Women Empowerment (beta=0.623).

Keywords--- ICT Tool, Role of ICT, Women Empowerment.

I. INTRODUCTION

Across the globe, nations have perceived Information and Communication Technology (ITC) as a viable instrument in catalyzing the economic activity in proficient administration, and in developing human resources. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are technological device and resources to make, circulate, store, bring value-addition and oversee information. The ICT segment embraces different sections for example telecommunications, TV, and radio broadcasting, computer hardware, software and services and electronic media etc. ICTs are mounting as a powerful tool for gender empowerment in a developing nation like India. Information and communication technologies can be powerful tools for progressing economic and social advancement through the arrangement of new sorts of economic activity, work openings, upgrades in human service conveyance and other services, and the expansion of networking, participation and advocacy within society.

Empowerment of women in the context of knowledge societies involves developing the capacities and abilities of women to get knowledge into the issues influencing them and furthermore developing their ability to voice their interests. It involves building up the abilities of women to conquer social and institutional barriers and reinforcing their interest in the economic and political processes to create a general improvement in their quality of life. Knowledge networking catalyzes the process of women's empowerment by opening up opportunities for women to freely well-spoken and exchange their thoughts, concerns and information, making the chance of their further

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advancement. By the utilization of ITC women can expand the extent of their activities and address issues previously beyond their capacity. There is a growing body of evidence on the use of ITC to empower women all over the world. It examines the fundamental difficulties and obstructions faced by women, prescribe strategies to address those difficulties and approaches to develop the conditions leading to women's empowerment.

II. OBJECTIVE

- To Identify the factors affecting women's empowerment;
- To Find out the potential of ICT for women's empowerment;
- Implement a model for measuring empowerment; and
- Identify any perceptual change due to intervention activities

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

ICTs are continually hailed as one of the best devices for economic advancement. An ITU study (2005) portrays ICTs as possibly powerful "development enablers." They are cost-effective with critical transformative force, permit creating nations to face a few phases of the improvement process and, in furnishing individuals straightforward with tools for self-empowerment, keep away from top-substantial and degenerate organizations (Heeks, 1999; Karake Shalhoub & Al Qasimi, 2006).

Empowerment refers to the capacity of individual to control their own predeterminations according to others in the society (Mason, 2005). There is no general meaning of women's empowerment as elements such as socio-cultural, geological, ecological, political and economic, as well as numerous different parts of nations and areas, impact it. Empowerment as "the development in individual's capacity to make vital life decisions in a setting where this capacity was recently denied to them (Kabeer, 1994). Another space of women's empowerment is innovative empowerment, which is as significant as the other interrelated spaces (Lennie, 2002). Moves in spaces are firmly associated with changes in the micro, meso and macro environments, both backward and forward. For that reason, women's empowerment should to be estimated in all three dimensions and all spaces of women's life (Charmes and Wieringa, 2003).

data is noted as an essential for empowerment, while cooperation drives empowerment by urging women to be effectively engaged in the advancement process, contribute thoughts, step up to the initiative to articulate needs and problems and assert their autonomy (Obayelu and Ogunlade, 2006). Women's full and equal access to ICT-based economic and instructive activities bolster women's commitment in business and home-based activities and support women to become more empowered. By getting information, women can improve and upgrade their quality of life. The literature on the enormous opportunities ICTs provide for women's empowerment is vibrant and wide ranging. Kelker and Nathan (2002) have argued that ITs have the potential to "redefined traditional gender roles" and that "the spread of IT-enabled services has been enormously helpful to both women and men, particularly those who have constrained abilities or lack of resources to invest in higher education.

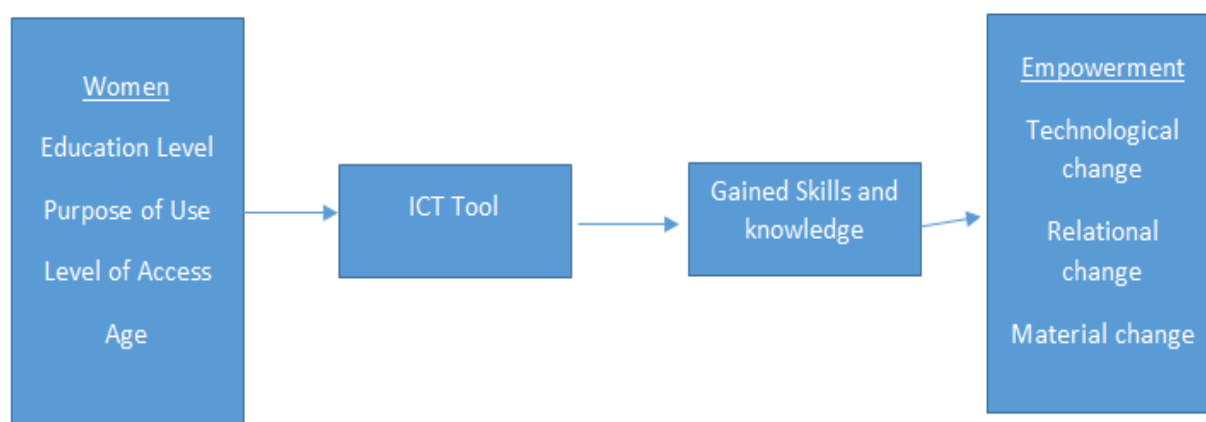
Women entrepreneurship is legitimately associated with women empowerment and it is an essential problem of many developing nations. The benefits of women entrepreneurship are numerous however women entrepreneurs are

as yet not engaged. Various reasons urged men to start new pursuits, however, on the other hand, there exist few factors that constrained women to become entrepreneurs.

There are alternate points of view in regards to the very requirement for empowerment. For instance, Mosedale (2003) has expressed that if women were to be empowered, at that point it ought to be comprehended that currently they are disempowered, for example impeded by the way power relations shape their decisions, openings and prosperity. As indicated by Mosedale (2003) empowerment can't be offered by an outsider however should be guaranteed by those looking for empowerment through on progressing procedure of reflection, analysis and activity. Kabeer (1999) brings up that women need empowerment as they are compelled by “the standards, convictions, customs and qualities through which societies separate among women and men, and accordingly, it is the process by which the individuals who have been denied the capacity to settle on vital life decisions procure such a capacity”, where strategic life choices are “basic for individuals to live the lives they need”. According to Rao and Keller (1995), women empowerment is characterized as “the capacity of women to be economically independent and confident with power over decisions influencing their life options and freedom from violence.

Empowerment of women in the context of knowledge societies entails developing the skills and capabilities of women to gain information into the issues impacting them and also building up their ability to voice their concerns. In this context ICTs are rising as an amazing tool for gender empowerment in several developing nation. There has been a quick development in the ICT sector since the late 1980s and the use of ICT has drastically extended since the 1990s. According the World Bank, tele – density in India had reached 3.8 percent of the population by 2001 (Jain, 2006).

IV. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



4.1 Hypothesis

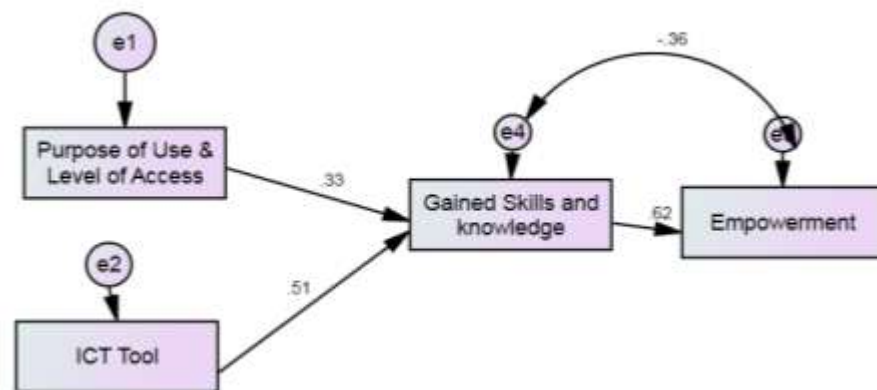
- H1 – there is a significant impact of Purpose of Use and Level of Access on ICT Tool
- H2 – there is a significant impact of ICT Tool on Gained Skills and knowledge
- H3 – there is a significant impact of Gained Skills and knowledge on Women Empowerment

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data collection process took place in Karur districts and 000 samplings were collected to women's through questioner later which was tested by AMOS software to validate the structural equation model. **Employees' organizational commitment, Employees' Eco-Friendly Behavior and Business Environmental Performance were involved in the model.** The methodological approach of this research study allowed the researcher to explore research question being presented and evaluate and analyze data with respect to the research hypotheses.

VI. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

6.1. Structural Equation Model



Goodness of Fit Statistics

Model	Chi- square/ df	GFI	AGFI	NFI	CFI	RMSEA
Hypothesized Model	1.624	0.987	0.934	0.963	1.00	0.62

Bentler, P.M. and Bonnet, D.C. (1980) study indicate the model fit can be checked by RMSEA which is less than 0.08 has a good fit and less than 0.05 has a closer fit. Chin and Todd (1995) study proposed that for goodness of model fit GFI (Goodness of Fit Index) and NFI (Normed Fit Index) should be above 0.9 and AGFI (Adjusted goodness-of-fit Index) should be above 0.8. Bentler (1990) study suggests for good model fit CFI (Comparative Fit Index) should be greater than 0.9. These values are revealing the results in respect of the validity of the proposed model. Few out of these indices fall within the generally accepted limits. This confirms that the available data set moderately fits into the proposed structural model.

Path			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Purpose of Use & Level of Access	→	Gained Skills and knowledge	0.333	0.029	4.809	***
ICT Tool	→	Gained Skills and knowledge	0.511	0.031	7.175	***
Gained Skills and knowledge	→	Empowerment	0.623	0.162	4.227	***

* 5 % level of significance

Above table shows causal relationships between ICT Tool with Gained Skills & Knowledge and Empowerment. From the table, beta value, error value and p-value corresponding to the causal relationship between ICT Tool with Gained Skills & Knowledge and Empowerment.

Purpose of Use & Level of Access and ICT Tool factor have positive impacts on Gained Skills and knowledge with the beta values of 0.33, 0.511 respectively. Gained Skills and knowledge have positive influence on Women Empowerment (beta=0.623).

VII. SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Women ought to be empowered by improving their abilities, skills and access to information technology. This will reinforce their capacity to battle negative depictions of women globally and provincially to challenge occurrences of malpractices of the intensity of an undeniably significant industry. Women should be engaged with decision-making in regards to the advancement of the new technologies in order to participate completely in their development and effect. Governments and others should promote an active and noticeable approach of mainstreaming a gender perspective in strategies and projects to address the issue of the assembly of the media.

Currently, information technology has changed the communication paradigm, making it no longer difficult to reach a numerous number of persons more or less at the unique time; and that too empower them to respond, connect as well as get a copy of the data within a low cost. The utilization of ICT helps to assess the gap between women's opportunities for enrichment in the informal economy and the developed sectors of the nation's economy. In an informal sector, women's can gain simple access to the net by way of tele-centers and get data about markets or administrative process, and to publicize their works to a wider clientele. It can be concluded that the women of Tamil Nadu is empowered by way of the help of information and communication technology. It has altered their position from previous. Tamil Nadu as a technologically advanced state in India is also doing a lot of projects for the women in city and village and un-educated women in specific. It has also taken numerous actions and developed various actions and processes along with government of India to overcome poverty and bring the women into the IT related industry. NGOs working in the field, multinational agencies and other private concerns have also expanded their help to develop IT among the women. The advancement of IT has empowered the women section to participate in the daily affairs of the state, which range from the household work to local governance.

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