



ICT Education for Rural Women and Girls: A case of Computer Education

KEYWORDS

ICT education, Empowerment of women, Computer education

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ABSTRACT *The empowerment of women has been recognized as a vital element in national development efforts. This is equally true in building the information society in our country where wide technical and economic disparities exist between men and women. Information and communication technologies (ICT) have played a major role in the development of societies. The rapid breakthrough in new information and communication technologies (ICTs) is changing the way knowledge is developed, acquired and delivered. The new technologies offer opportunities to innovate on course content and teaching methods and to widen access to higher learning. This paper explained that computer education how playing critical role in empowering of the rural women. For this purpose I have collected primary data on socio economic characteristics of the rural women and creating employment through computer education in Mahabubnagar district of Andhra Pradesh. The findings of the study, 30 percent of the respondents got the employment in various schools to teach the basic computer skills, 26 percent of the respondents are creating employment themselves, 16 percent of the respondents are doing the service sector jobs like data entry operators and 12 percent of the respondents are doing business. Reaming 16 percent of the respondents are utilizing their knowledge to higher education.*

Introduction

The empowerment of women has been recognized as a vital element in national development efforts. This is equally true in building the information society in our country where wide technical and economic disparities exist between men and women. Information and communication technologies (ICT) have played a major role in the development of societies. The rapid breakthroughs in new information and communication technologies (ICTs) are changing the way knowledge is developed, acquired and delivered. The new technologies offer opportunities to innovate on course content and teaching methods and to widen access to higher learning. Women education in India plays a very important role in the overall development of the country. It not only helps in the development of half of the human resources, but in improving the quality of life at home and outside. Educated women not only tend to promote education of their girl children, but also can provide better guidance to all their children. Moreover educated women can also help in the reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of the population. Women power is crucial to the economic growth of any country. In India this is yet to meet the requirements despite reforms. Little has been achieved in the area of women empowerment, but for this to happen, this sector must experience a chain of reforms. Though India could well become one of the largest economies in the world, it is being hindered due to a lack of women's participation.

Review of Literature

There are very few studies which have been conducted to analyze the role of ICTs for women empowerment; some of the relevant studies are as follows: CEEWA (Council for the Economic Empowerment of Women of Africa) (2005) in his study in Uganda found that as an enormous source of information, ICTs constitute a powerful learning tool that provides access to marketing information that can help women's business succeed. ICTs like mobile telephony, can also offer direct and inexpensive means of communication for women's organizations and enable them to share knowledge on a quick and collective basis. However, access to ICTs is restricted because of oppressive gender relations, social cultural barriers and distance to the ICT facilities, poor infrastructure and costs for access ICTs. Jain (2006) observed that, ICT has played an important role in changing the concept of work and workplace. New areas of employment such as networking, i.e. working from a distance, are becoming feasible with new technology.

Dalal (2006) argued that, while there is recognition of the potential of ICT as a tool for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, a 'gender divide' has also been identified reflected in the lower numbers of women accessing and using ICT compared with men. Unless this gender divide is specifically addressed, there is a risk that ICT may exacerbate existing inequalities between women and men and create new forms of inequality. The study by the Vijalakshmi and Bhavani (2006) examines the nature and source of gender variations in internet use and how cultural factors contribute to such variations. The study provides insight into the gender variations in using the internet space and forming online relationships and online discourse. On the whole, the study supports the fact that the internet provides an opportunity for women to construct their identities to challenge certain traditional norms and reconstruct their lives. The findings of Moser (1993) indicate that the assumption where access to ICT will automatically empower women economically or otherwise is questionable. On the contrary, women's social position in society has not changed much. D. A. Patil. et. al. (2009), The Role of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) as a tool for development has attracted the sustained attention of the government and NGOs. The millennium declaration adopted in 2000 underscored the urgency of ensuring that the benefits of new technologies, especially ICTs, are made available to all. How ICT based initiatives empower rural and deprived women; it tries to clarify a theoretical dilemma between meaning and measurement of empowerment and provides a holistic definition of empowerment. They suggested that to use ICTs proactively and effectively to promote gender equality and for the empowerment of rural and deprived women. The study used observations, focus group discussions and review of documents to collect secondary and primary data. Rajeev Kumar and Sharma M.K. (2012), the particular focus of this paper is information and communication technologies for rural development like women's literacy. ICT built the world's most affordable, durable education for all people. ICT designed specifically for people who cannot read and who live without electricity like radio and television. Information and Communication and Technology provide the voice knowledge, SMS facility etc. Rural e- Governance applications is the important role the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) play in the realm of rural women's development like literacy, knowledge, job, etc. For centuries, women in this country have been socially and economically handicapped. They

have been deprived of equal participation in the socio-economic activities of the nation especially the condition is worst among the rural and deprived section women. Women need ICT for the same reasons as men to access information of importance to their productive, reproductive and community roles and to obtain additional resources. Computer education really helped the rural women for getting job opportunities and source of income. Based on the above review of literature, this study is carried out Mahabubnagar district in Andhra Pradesh.

Area of the study:

The study area was Mahabubnagar district of Andhra Pradesh. Mahabubnagar district was one of the backward districts in India. According to 2011 census India Literacy rate 74.04, female literacy rate in India is 65.46. Andhra Pradesh literacy rate 67.66, female literacy rate is 59.74 and Mahabubnagar literacy rate 56.06 and female literacy rate is 45.65. Mahabubnagar district is lowest literacy rate in Andhra Pradesh comparing to all other districts. Mahabubnagar district still has above 50 percent women illiterates. Education is a major source of the human being to develop themselves. Development of Mahabubnagar district is required to improve overall literacy rate as well as improve women literacy rate.

Objectives

1. To understand the role of ICTs for women empowerment.
2. To study the Socio-Economic characteristics of the selected samples.
3. To study how Computer education are helpful for the empowerment of rural women.

Methodology

Sampling method: For this purpose I have collected 50 sample households in Mahabubnagar district of Andhra Pradesh. Area of the study selected purposively. Sample selection made randomly. Well Structured questionnaire used to collect the information by covering the socio-economic status, by using interview method.

Data Analysis:

Table – 1 Age wise distribution of the respondents

Sl. No	Age of the Respondents	No of the Respondents	Percentages
1	Up to 18	6	12
2	19- 25	20	40
3	26 – 30	18	36
4	Above 31	6	12
	Total	50	100

The above table shows that age wise distribution of the respondents. Most of the respondents (40 %) are under age group of 19 – 25 years and 26 – 30 years (36 %). Remaining 12 percent are up to 18 years and above 31 years (12 %).

Table – 2 Educational levels of the respondents

Sl. No	Educational Levels	No of the Respondents	Percentages
1	10 th – 12 th level	6	12
2	Graduates level	22	44
3	Post Graduates level	18	36
4	Diploma and others	4	8
	Total	50	100

Table – 2 shows that Educational levels of the respondents. The higher education of the respondent are Post Graduation (36 %) and Graduation level (44 %). Remaining of them 10th to 12th level 12 percent and Diploma and others are 8 percent.

Table – 3 Social status of the respondent

Sl. No	Social status	No of the Respondents	Percentages
1	OC	11	22
2	OBC	26	52
3	SC	8	16
4	ST	5	10
	Total	50	100

The above table – 3 shows that Social status of the respondents. 52 percent of the respondents are under OBC category, 22 percent of the respondents are OC's, 16 percent SC's and 10 percent of the respondents are ST's.

Table – 4 Occupation of the family

Sl. No	Occupation	No of the Respondents	Percentages
1	Agriculture & its Related	15	30
2	Govt. Employee	5	10
3	Private Employee	10	20
4	Business	12	24
5	Self employment	8	16
	Total	50	100

The above table – 4 shows that Occupation of the family of the respondents. 30 percent of the respondents are Agriculture & its Related, Business (24 %), Private Employees (20 %), Self employment (16 %), and 10 percent of the respondents are Govt. Employees.

Table – 5 Annual income of the family

Sl. No	Annual income	No of the Respondents	Percentages
1	Up to 50000	10	20
2	50001-100000	22	44
3	100001-150000	10	20
4	150001-200000	5	10
5	Above 200000	3	6
	Total	50	100

The above table – 5 shows that Annual income of the family of the respondents. 44 percent of the respondents are 50000 to 100000 income level, 20 percent are 100000 to 150000 and remaining 20 percent are up to 50000 income level and 6 percent of the respondents are above 200000.

Benefits of the Computer Education

The Benefits of the computer education is most of the respondents are getting employment through their respective computer course like Post Graduate Diploma in Computer Applications (PGDCA), Diploma in Computer Applications (DCA) and Diploma in Desk-Top Publishing (DTP).

Table – 6 Getting employment through computer education

Sl. No	Employment	No of the Respondents	Percentages
1	Service sector jobs	8	16
2	Teaching field	15	30
3	Self employment	13	26
4	Business	6	12
5	Others	8	16
	Total	50	100

The above table shows that Getting employment through computer education. 30 percent of the respondents got the employment in various schools to teach the basic computer skills, 26 percent of the respondents are creating employment themselves, 16 percent of the respondents are doing the service sector jobs like data entry operators and 12 percent of the respondents are doing business. Remaining 16 percent of the respondents are utilizing their knowledge to higher education.

Table – 7

Variables	No	Mean	Std. Deviation	"t" value	Level of Significance
Age	50	25.46	5.323	33.821	0.01
education	50	2.40	.808	21.000	0.01
Social Status	50	2.14	.881	17.179	0.01
Occupation	50	2.86	1.485	13.621	0.01
Income	50	107140.0	56247.634	13.469	0.01
Employment	50	2.82	1.304	15.286	0.01

The above table shows that Age, education, social status, occupation, annual income and getting employment are statistically significance at 0.01 levels.

Conclusion

Now a day's computer education is a most important one. The Benefits of the computer education is most of the respondents are getting employment. And also establishing own business and creating self employment through com-

puter education. Few of the respondents are applicable this knowledge to their higher education. Rural women are getting employment through computer education and also using internet facilities in their mobiles. Rural women's are empowering through computer education. The variables which are influence by the empowerment of women like Age, education, social status, occupation, annual income and getting employment are statistically significance at 0.01 levels.

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