

Information and Communication Technologies (Icts) as emerging as a Powerful tool for Women Empowerment

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Abstract

Emancipation of women requires developing the capacities and skills of women in light of knowledge societies, as well as enhancing their ability to speak up about issues that affect them. So in many developing nations, information and communication technologies (ICTs) are becoming an important instrument for empowering females. Research conducted with female students reinforces the notion that simply providing them with easy access to ICT does not advance their interest in it. Students' reflections, a measurement check using a questionnaire based on psychological endowment characteristics, and participant-produced drawings were among the approaches utilised to collect data. Objective Tests and Action Research Workshops were utilised to assess this aspect of student agency. Knowledge levels were compared before and after the workshops. Women's empowerment is a multifaceted idea, but it is possible to attain it in some areas with the help of ICT. Women need an atmosphere where they may make decisions for themselves, their families, and society as a whole without interference. Every member of society must be empowered for the country's development to be successful. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) has the potential to significantly contribute to the empowerment of women.

Keywords:*Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Powerful, Women, Empowerment, etc.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment in the context of knowledge societies means developing their abilities and skills in order to obtain insight into the issues that impact them, as well as increasing their ability to express their concerns. In this environment, information and communication technologies (ICTs) are emerging as a significant instrument for women empowerment in many developing nations. During the late 1980s, the information and communications technology (ICT) sector has experienced fast expansion, and the use of ICT has increased considerably since the 1990s. It is important to note that information and communication technologies (ICTs) are a broad set of technological tools and resources that can be used to create, disseminate, store, add value to, and manage data (Poonam Gupta and S.K.Chaturvedi, 2021).

The information and communications technology industry includes segments as diverse as telecommunications, television and radio broadcasting, computer hardware, software, and services, as well as electronic media such as the internet and electronic mail, among others. Advances in information technology have facilitated a global communications network that transcends national boundaries and has an impact on public policy, private attitudes and behaviour, particularly among children and young adults, since globalisation is opening up the Indian economy at a breakneck pace in recent decades. There is tremendous potential for the media to make a considerably bigger contribution to the advancement of women anywhere it is used (Anuradha Yadav and J. Dutta, 2021). Women are increasingly participating in jobs in the communications business, but only a minority have reached positions of decision-making authority or served on governing boards or other groups that have an impact on media policy. The failure to eliminate gender-based stereotyping that may be found in public and private local, national, and international media organisations demonstrates a lack of gender sensitivity in the media industry. It is imperative that the continuous presentation of negative and degrading images of women in media communications - electronic, print, visual, and auditory - be addressed. The print and electronic media in the majority of countries do not present a balanced picture of women's different lives and contributions to society in a rapidly changing global environment.

1.1 Women in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) employment

Due to technological advancements, the significance of time and distance in business and manufacturing activities is becoming less significant. As a result of technological advancements, women are now occupying a disproportionately large number of positions outsourced by large corporations. Women can therefore work from any location and at any time, generating additional revenue that will enable them to become more financially independent and empowered. Recently, corporations such as Ford and General Electric have expanded their operations into Asia, where they employ a big number of women who are proficient in information technology and data administration. Employment in new fields such as telemarketing, medical transcription, and other related fields has also created a wealth of new job prospects for women (Dr. Jeevan Kumar*, Dr. Kamallesh Mahajan, 2020),.

These positions are unquestionably undervalued and fall into the bottom section of the ICT employment market; nonetheless, they are creating opportunities where none previously existed. Significantly, the act of establishing information networking generates employment opportunities in developing countries on its own terms. In order to succeed in knowledge networking, professional and trained knowledge workers are required who can execute certain jobs such as interpreting, collecting, analysing, and searching information, adding value to it, and disseminating it, among other things. A significant proportion of women are employed in such positions.

1.2 Strategies to increase women's access to information and communications technology

Women's equitable access to information and communications technology (ICT) as well as their autonomy in receiving and producing information that is relevant to their concerns and viewpoints are key challenges. Because of this, they must be involved in decision-making surrounding the development of new technology in order to be able to fully benefit from its development and impact.

- It is necessary to take a rights-based approach to the formulation of ICT policy, with the understanding that everyone has the right to affordable access to ICTs. After then, and only then, can we work toward ensuring universal access to information and communications technologies (ICTs), and thereafter promote and support the use of ICTs for women's empowerment.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Rajesh Tiwari and Bimal Anjum(2020) the purpose of this essay is to examine the role of information technology in the empowerment of women. India has risen to become the world's leading participant in the information technology (IT) industry. For the past several decades, India's industrial landscape has been dominated by the expansion of the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. However, in the last ten years, and particularly after 1995, the information technology industry has begun to make a considerable contribution to India's economic growth. Information Technology is presently a thriving business with a market capitalization of \$60 billion. When it comes to the inclusion of women in the workforce, the information technology industry is exceptional. Every second new hire in the information technology industry is now a woman. The government's e-governance project has also created an opportunity for women's empowerment by improving their access to information. Women have the same access to knowledge that men do thanks to technological advancements. This information flow is completely unedited and free of any alterations. The key participants in the information technology business are now focusing on creating an atmosphere that will attract and retain a talented female workforce. Companies are now providing benefits such as breastfeeding centres, extended maternity leave policies (including work from home options), creches, and the ability to relocate to a city of their choosing if their husband is transferred. This is helping to create a more women-friendly workplace. An excellent human resource practise, it has become a matter of survival for organisations confronting a scarcity of qualified employees in today's competitive market. Gender diversity has evolved into a necessity in the business world.

Jaspreet Singh and Amir Shamim Shiekh, are (2020) Gender bias had been there for a long time in many parts of the world. Throughout history, women have been relegated to a secondary position in the economic, political, and social structures of every society on the planet, and this has been due to socialisation and patriarchal society. Despite the fact that women and girls account for half of the world's population, their contributions in the majority of fields are insignificant. The most difficult challenge for any administration is the empowerment of women in order to include them and their contributions in the mainstream operations of the country. No one can deny that information and communication technology (ICT) is beneficial to everyone in every possible field today in the twenty-first century. Technology for information and communication (ICT) has grown to be a vital and fundamental component of our daily lives. Informatics and communication technologies (ICT) are generally understood to be a wide collection of electronic technologies as well as technological tools and resources for the purpose of communicating information and for the creation of data as well as for storing, distributing and managing it. Information and communication technology (ICT) such as videos, televisions, multimedia, and computer software that combines text, sound, and colourful moving images can be used to provide challenging and authentic content that will engage the learning process and encourage students to think critically. Women play a major role in a variety of fields such as economics, politics, social issues, sports, education, and entrepreneurship, among others.

K. Ratheeswari (2018) At this point in time, information and communication technology (ICT) have an impact on every element of human life. They play important roles in the workplace, in business, in education, and in the entertainment industry. Furthermore, many individuals regard information and communication technologies (ICTs) as catalysts for change, including changes in working circumstances, information management and exchange, instructional methods, learning approaches, scientific research, and access to information and communication technology. In this digital age, the use of information and communications technology (ICT) in the classroom is critical for providing students with opportunity to learn and apply the necessary 21st century skills. It is important for teachers to use ICT to improve teaching and learning because it allows them to fulfil their role as producers of pedagogical settings. Teachers at all levels of educational programmes benefit from the use of information and communication teacher to present their lessons in an engaging and easy-to-understand manner. ICT is being used to make teacher training programmes more helpful and appealing in India today, according to experts. Clearly, information and communication technologies (ICTs), as illustrated by the internet and interactive multimedia, will be a major emphasis of future education. These technologies must be successfully integrated into formal teaching and learning, particularly in a teacher education institution.

Mani Mookkiah and Mahendra Prabu (2017) Women's empowerment is a critical instrument in bringing about positive changes in their socioeconomic circumstances. Women receive a higher share of control over resources-material, human, and intellectual, such as knowledge, information, ideas, and financial resources, which include access to money and control over decision-making in the home, community, society, and nation-as a result of their empowerment. There is an information revolution taking place around the world, which is being accompanied by the opening up of whole new horizons in communication technologies. Telecommunications, television and radio broadcasting, computer hardware, software, and services, and electronic media are just a few of the segments that make up the information and communications technology sector. Unequal access to and involvement in all communication channels, particularly the media, and a lack of adequate mobilisation to promote women's contributions to society are among the issues addressed. Aside from that, the current study investigates the hurdles that prevent women from using information and usage technologies (ICTs) and proposes solutions to increase their access to ICTs.

3. OBJECTIVES

- To study Strategies to improve women's access to ICT.
- To evaluate improve in Internet usage skills and gain confidence in using the Internet.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Methods Used

In order to collect information, several methods were used, including student comments, a measurement check through a questionnaire based on psychological endowment characteristics, and participant produced drawings. The methods utilised to assess this facet of agency included assessing participants' knowledge levels prior to and after the workshops, administering an Objective Test, and conducting Action Research Workshops.

4.2 Ethnographic Action Research

The research was carried out in the Department of women's studies at the University of Calicut in India. The focus group consisted of thirteen master's students who were born between 1988 and 1990 and were born in the United States. When it came to classroom instruction, the University used a traditional approach. The Department possessed two PCs with Internet access, but the curriculum did not include any learning activities that required students to interact with ICT settings in order to be successful. As a result, the pupils did not use the Internet for any of their academic pursuits.

5. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The number of students who had used and had knowledge in the relevant tool before to the training and Action Research Workshops, as well as a picture of how the students have changed as a result of the training and workshops, are all important metrics to track. The response group consisted of eight female college students. The majority of the students had never heard of the tools that they had been introduced to previously. The number of students who considered they to be experts in the use of the tools was quite low. It was not anticipated that they would become specialists in searching, but rather that their Internet usage skills would improve and that they would gain confidence in utilizing the Internet. The most critical parameter that was examined was the one that stated "no change." In response to the interventions, which took the form of Internet training and workshops, just two students stated that their knowledge had not altered significantly.

Table 1 improve in Internet usage skills and gain confidence in using the Internet

Tools	Usage&KnowledgeLevelBeforeTheWorkshops				Usage&KnowledgeLevelAfterTheWorkshops		
	Haven'theard before	Have heard,but didn'tknowhowtouse	Haveused	Wasanexpert	Nochange	SomeImprovement	LotofImprovement
GoogleSearch		4	4			2	6
BooleanSearch	6	1	1			6	2
GoogleBooks	4	3	1			7	1
GoogleScholar	5	3				4	4
EmailID		5	2	1		2	6
Delicious	7	1			1	4	3

MSWord		3	3	2	1	1	6
GoogleDocs	6	2				4	4
MSPowerPoint		2	5	1		2	6
GoogleMaps	6	1	1			2	6
Mindmeister	8					4	4
GoogleForms	8					3	5
Googlecalendar	6	2				7	1
Twitter	4	4				1	7
Blogs	2	6				2	6

6. CONCLUSION

Women's empowerment is a complex and multidimensional idea, but it is one that may be realised through the right application of information and communications technology. Women deserve an atmosphere in which they are given complete autonomy to make decisions for themselves, their families, and the wider community. Every individual in the society must be empowered in order for the country to move forward and attain its development goals. The use of information and communications technology (ICT) to achieve women's empowerment is a revolutionary step. The effective use of information and communications technology (ICT) increases the level of knowledge among women. Online training, e-commerce, e-classes, online trading, and online banking are all made feasible through the use of information and communications technology. ICT, on the other hand, is also producing online-based occupations that are viable in order to fulfill the goal of increasing women's participation in the overall service sector. There is a pressing need for comprehensive research into the impact of information and communications technology (ICT) in women's empowerment, particularly in emerging and poor countries. Women play a major role in a variety of fields such as economics, politics, social issues, sports, education, and entrepreneurship, among others. The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between the role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and women empowerment. It discusses the main challenges and impediments faced by women, and it makes recommendations for strategies to address those challenges and for ways to cultivate the conditions that lead to women's empowerment in the workplace.

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