

Empowering Rural Women through Information Technology

Author: Tanuja Gill

Lecturer in Department of Computer Science

Hindu Kanya College, Kapurthala

Email: info@tanuja-gill.com

ABSTRACT:

This paper recommends that there is an important role of Information Technology in the field of women empowerment such empowerment could easily be seen higher in the Urban area as compared to the rural area. There is high time for providing training in the tribal villages with the support of the administration for strengthening the National Computer literacy Mission. There must be the provision of allocation of budget and funding in the Ministry and also in the Planning commission for testing conceptual framework at the grass root level to assess the effectiveness of empowering women through Information Technology.

INTRODUCTION:

Women are a great human resource in all countries and the role of women in society is critical for development. Arguably, to empower women is to increase their control over the decisions that affect their lives both within and outside the household. There are many developing countries where women are not even listed in any citizen registration database, which makes it very difficult for them, especially the poorer ones in rural areas and of under-privileged class to assert social security, social protection, legacy, land etc. as there is practically no proof of their existence. Through their empowerment women gain greater share of control over resources - material, human and intellectual such as knowledge, information, ideas - and financial resources involving access to money and control over decision making in the home, community, society and nation. It leads them to become a critical and vital stakeholder among the human capital and their strategic presence in the society is widely accepted. Market economy trends in the new era of globalization have widened the gap between education and technology opportunities for men and women. Worldwide the capacity of women to engage in the knowledge society is grossly underutilized. In the knowledge society they need access not only to new technologies but also to education, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities as well as the ability to participate fully in knowledge based activities.

It is evident that rural India is contributing two-thirds of the total nation's population; thus, this heart of India requires heavy enforcement of prolific strategies, which could uplift the scenario of the nation as a whole. IT has become the chief determinant of the progress of nations, communities & individuals. It is considered crucial that the improvements in our society benefit all citizens. No single group should be ignored or favored. The only way is "to make it better for all".

1. APPLICATION OF IT IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN RURAL AREAS

1.1. Education:

Education women is more important, when women gets educated the entire family gets educated. It has a significant impact on multiple facets of society. Creating more awareness about the importance of women education in the society is more important. Medias (e.g., newspaper, radio, television) are playing important role for making awareness about education. Apart from traditional class room education, setting up virtual class room using video conferencing will increase their involvement in education. By increasing literacy level in the rural parts will definitely make tremendous changes in the future.

1.2. Training:

Apart from literacy women need vocational training to uplift their status. They should be able to stand on their feet and provide support for their families. Depending upon the literacy level Computer training can be provided and they has to be motivated to have internet browsing centers, Desk Top Publishing centers. Providing training on Internet and email services will be very useful for expanding their business to local, national as well as international level. They can even run BPO centers if they have more people in their locality. Depending upon the trend information system with multilingual facility has to be developed which will provide guidance and other related information for setting up their own enterprise.

1.3. Self Help Group:

Self help group has become popular in rural parts of India. Most of the groups started small scale industries and delivering good quality goods / services to the consumers. Developing a web based information system about the SHG (Self Help Group) and providing more information about the

various related details (i.e., training details, financial support, marketing, Government policies, etc), will help other groups to communicate and enhance their business activity relevant to their expertise. Incorporating a Management Information System, tracking the progress and functions of the groups are some of the other important things where the IT applications can be very useful.

1.4. Motivation Aspects:

In general women's are working oriented with lot of concentration, dedication, perfection and resulted oriented. Motivation is important for all kind of people, identifying the right people and motivating is an important thing. Normally they will be popularized in papers and magazines, this kind of information should also available in the Internet, which will enable International recognition to them.

Women force comprises only a small percentage of the scientific and academic community barring teachers at the school and pre-school levels. But they have an attitude to work with sincerity and loyalty while keeping pace with the required timings, and given proper own space, they can play an increasingly important role in social, industrial and economic development of the country. The involvement and engagement of women in the Information Society on an equal footing with men would directly contribute to improving the livelihood of people, making it more sustainable and thereby promoting the social and economic advancement of societies. Governments must design and implement national policies and programmes that promote science and technology education for women and girls and which encourage women to enter into high value added ICT career.

2. OVERVIEW OF GOVERNMENT PROJECT FOR RURAL WOMEN EDUCATION IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

2.1. e-Mahile :

Karnataka State Women's Development Corporation (KSWDC), is giving training to the 250 women who are members of different self-help groups. Training is being given under the banner of e-Mahile. This is a pilot project being implemented under the ASARE scheme by the KSWDC for women in Belgaum, Dharwad, Madikeri, Shimoga, Hassan, Mysore, Ramnagaram, Davangere, Haveri, Bellary and Chitradurga districts.

e-Mahile is conceptualized to provide all possible services to the rural public through rural women. Women, particularly members of women self-help groups, who have a minimum qualification of SSLC, are given comprehensive computers education. They are taught how to access the Internet for collecting information and use it for various works. Then, each trained woman who is called village service provider, will be given a laptop, printer, UPS, soil testing kit, LCD projector, digital camera, e-mahile dual language software and educational CDs, Internet connection. e-Mahile is based on PURA (Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas) visualized by the former President Abdul Kalam. The e-mahile software can disseminate information in Kannada and English.

Apart from women, one of their brothers or their husbands will also be given training to assist and help the women in odd hours and during exigency in their villages. They said that they will help the women to get computers and various other accessories after the training camp and they will coordinate between the women development corporation, banks and the trainees in getting loans to install computers in their villages. The NGO will keep in touch with the trained women till they get completely familiarized with the computers and are able to set right small problems that may crop up in computers and in establishing Net connection. Apart from computers training, women are taught Basic English grammar by a professor of a college here.

Personality development courses and Yoga classes are the added benefits. Many women with their newborns are attending the training camp and the organizers have set up a crèche and appointed women to take care of the children.

3. FACTORS DRIVING IT TRANSITION IN RURAL:

IT in rural approach is concerned first & foremost to people. It seeks to gain an accurate and realistic understanding of women's strengths and how they develop into positive livelihood outcomes. It is important to note that IT can generate multiple benefits in rural areas so as to:

3.1. PROVIDE BETTER USAGE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Agriculture is the main vehicle, which needs a rural policy to be delivered. IT increases shareability of information typically used for improving income-earning opportunities (e.g., weather news for farmers, to enhance sustainable growth in farming).

3.2 EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Not only is education important, computer education too is critical considering the role that technology plays in our lives, and is likely to play in the coming years. Moreover the youth with adequate computer knowledge could be employed in jobs like data entry and other related areas, providing the prospect of using technology.

3.3. ADMINISTRATION (GOVERNANCE)

A Government is very much like a large multi-location Enterprise. If we think of intelligent, real-time enterprises, we can also apply the same ideas to enable intelligent, real-time governance in rural areas. The villages are part of the real-time governance supply-chain. A supply chain is only as good as its weakest link. Today, isolated villages are the equivalent of unconnected small and medium enterprises in supply chains.

3.4. HEALTH CARE

The care for rural residents in their own home as far as possible is sometimes difficult to implement due to difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff in this poorly paid sector. The future of IT in rural health network can be viewed in terms of phases of communication enhancement.

CONCLUSION:

Women should be encouraged to bring their vision and leadership, knowledge and skills, views and aspirations into the development agenda from the grassroots to international levels. Science and technology brings economic growth and well-being to people and it is not only the empowerment of women through science and technology, but also the enrichment of science and technology through women's participation. It is not the concern of one nation only, but there are many players and stakeholders in the aim to reach this millennium goal.

We just hope that women become empowered at 100% and become equal to men so that both of them may work side by side for a better world of today.

REFERENCES :

[1] June Lennie “Including a diversity of rural women in a communication technology access project: Taking the macro and micro contexts into account” 5th Community Networking Conference, 3-5 July 2002, Monash University.

[2] M.S.Swaminathan “Assessment of Impact of Information Technology on Rural Areas of India” International Development Research Center (IDRC), Canada.

[3] R. Rakesh “Role of Information Technology in Women Empowerment” Global Journal of Finance and Management. Global Journal of Finance and Management, ISSN 0975 - 6477 Vol.2

[4] Singh S.P. and Biswas, P.K. (2008) ‘An Overview of Changing Scenario of Women Empowerment in India’s Five Year Plans: A Futuristic Vision of Eleventh Five Year Plan Towards Women’s Sustainability in Global Era’ Paper presented in the National Seminar on Gender Budgeting and Women Empowerment. 2009.