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Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the context of Rural Women Empowerment

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Abstract:

The advancements in technology have revolutionized the world, with information and communication technology (ICT) emerging as a significant catalyst for change. ICT has not only bridged geographical distances within villages, towns, and countries but has also connected people worldwide. This research paper focuses on the transformative power of ICT in empowering rural women and its role in overcoming various challenges. By highlighting the importance of women's participation in information technology, it aims to demonstrate how ICT facilitates access to resources, services, and opportunities for women, ultimately leading to the creation of an empowered society. Through an examination of the impact of ICT on women's empowerment, this study sheds light on the ways in which technology acts as a driving force for positive change and equality.

Keywords: ICT, Information, Communication, Technology, Women, Empowerment, Rural, Awareness, MDG, National, International, Curriculum, Wireless technology, WSIS.

Introduction:

The word Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is the organized form of 'three' words in the English language. 'I' = Information. + 'C' = Communication + 'T' = Technology in which the word 'Information' is from (information or information, knowledge, news) etc. The words 'Communication' (communication or communication) and 'Technology' (technical) means those technical means of communicating information or information, which today are used to transmit information in one way or the other at the village, town, city, national, international level. They are helpful in education and by which a person sitting at home remains indirectly in

contact with the environment around him and various types of events, changes, processes etc. happening in the country, abroad.

"ICT, or information and communication technology, refers to equipment used for information handling, including production, storage, processing, distribution, and exchange of goods, applications, and services. The term 'ICT' gained popularity in the 1980s among educational researchers and was widely adopted after its use in a UK government report by Dennis Stevenson in 1997 and the revised National Curriculum for England, Wales, and Northern Ireland in 2000.

In 2001, the United Nations General Assembly linked ICT to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and emphasized its role in women empowerment. Global efforts have been ongoing to improve the status of women, recognizing ICT as a powerful tool for their empowerment.

The need for women empowerment arises from centuries of atrocities and exploitation, aiming to provide women equal rights and opportunities to break free from the patriarchal system. Connecting women to the mainstream of development is crucial for the country's progress and realizing the vision of a developed nation. Swami Vivekananda emphasized the importance of women's participation in nation-building for prosperity.

ICT plays a vital role in empowering women by reaching inaccessible areas and creating awareness where traditional efforts have fallen short. Awareness creation, especially at the individual level, is essential for women's development, and ICT can successfully fulfill this purpose".

Literature Review:

- Hicks, R. (1999) "Information and Communication "Technology: Poverty and Development" – has visualized the impact of information and communication technology on poverty and consequently the direction of development in the society.
- Mitter, S. (2003) "Part-11 Globalization and ICT Employment Opportunities for Women" Globalization: As a result of information and communication technology, employment opportunities for women have been thrown open in various fields.
- Pillai and Shantha (2008)The research paper titled "ICT and Empowerment Promotion: Can We Make It Happen? Some Reflections on Kerala's Experiences" discusses the role of information and communication technology (ICT) in promoting employment opportunities for economically disadvantaged women. It shares the experiences of 'Karla' and highlights the positive impact of ICT on empowering and providing employment to poor women.

Objectives:

- To analyze the role of information and communication technology (ICT) in empowering rural women.
- To assess the level of access to ICT among rural women and its impact on their decision-making abilities.
- To investigate how ICT enhances awareness, confidence, and knowledge of personal aspects among women in rural areas.
- To examine the contribution of ICT in the economic empowerment of rural women, including its impact on income generation and livelihood opportunities**.**

Hypothesis of the study:

H1: The knowledge level of rural women increases as a result of ICT.

H2: The awareness of crimes among women in ladies has increased due to ICT.

H3: The impact of ICT is higher on educated and working women compared to uneducated and domestic women.

Study Area and Subject Matter:

The research focuses on rural women and girls from different age groups (15-75 years) residing in the gram panchayats of Lormi, Pendra, Masturi, Takhatpur, and Bilha in Bilaspur district, Chhattisgarh.

Sampling Technique:

A representative sample of 253 rural women from Bilaspur district was selected using categorical random sampling, taking into consideration their overall qualities and classifying them into different categories.

Nature of the Research:

The nature of this research is exploratory, aiming to explore and gain insights into the topic of rural women empowerment and information and communication technology (ICT) in the study area.

Data Collection Sources:

Data collection methods are divided into two parts: primary and secondary sources.

- Primary sources include observations, interviews, and questionnaires (interview schedule) consisting of various types of open-ended, closed-ended, combined, double-director, and hierarchical questions.

- Secondary sources include letters, life histories, relevant articles, newspapers, magazines, government reports, and internet sources.

Fact Collection:

For this research, 253 interview schedules were prepared specifically for the selected area. These schedules included multiple-choice questions of varying nature, and data were collected through direct interaction with respondents via observation and interviews. The information gathered aimed to address the research objectives and present authentic facts related to various aspects of the study. Classification, tabulation and analysis:

1. On the basis of use of 'Telecom Services (Mobile)'

S. No.	Group name	Category Name	Responsible	
			Number	**Percent (%)**
A	Telecom (Mobile)	Yes	253	100
B	Related information	No		
	Total		253	100

It is clear from the observation of the above table that 100% of the rural women who use mobile telecommunication technology are in contact with this technology today and are using it in some form or the other when needed, including all those responsible. Whose daily routine or occasional use is included, in conclusion it can be said that today women in rural areas are also not untouched by the use of this technology and mobile technology has become an integral part of her life.

2. Classification based on the use of 'Internet'.

S. No.	Group name	Category Name	Responsible	
			Number	**Percent (%)**
A	Internet Usage	Yes	134	53.3
B	Relative	No	119	46.7
	Total		253	100

In the above table, there are 53.3 percent rural women as respondents who use the Internet, mostly students, working and some home educated women who use the Internet in one way or the other and 46.7. Internet use was not found in percent of the respondents. In conclusion, the increasing trend of using internet technology among women can be seen as the future of empowered rural women could.

3. Classification based on information on 'Emergency Help Line Number'.

S. No.	Group name	Category Name	Responsible	
			Number	**Percent (%)**
A	Related to Emergency Help	Yes	142	56.4
B	line information	No	111	43.6
	Total		253	100

It is known from the study of the table that 56.4 percent of the respondents were found to have information about the emergency helpline while 43.6 percent of the respondents were found to have no knowledge about it. In conclusion, as a result of ICT, today rural women seem to be very conscious about their safety.

4. Categorization on the basis of viewing of 'News'

S. No.	Group name	Category Name	Responsible	
			Number	**Percent (%)**
A	Information related to	Yes	213.7	84.5
B	News visual	No	39.3	15.5
	Total		253	100

On the question related to watching news in the above table, maximum 84.5 percent of the respondents answered yes, which was related to different categories. Whereas 15.5 percent of the respondents do not answer this. In conclusion, it can be said that ICT is playing an important role in creating awareness and curiosity among women, due to which rural women are very curious not only about their surroundings but also about the country and the world and want to be aware of all kinds of information are.

5. Classification based on 'Women's Day' information

S. No.	Group name	Category Name	Responsible	
			Number	**Percent (%)**
A	Women's day related	Yes	101	40
B	information	No	76	30
		Indifference	76	30
	Total		253	

Statistics related to the study show that among the women who have information about Women's Day, maximum 40 percent and 30 percent are those women who did not know the appropriate (exact) date, but were found to have approximate information. And the answer of 30 percent remained in no. In conclusion, it can be said that mostly women are getting a lot of awareness about their existence.

6. Classification on the basis of "belief in science and technology" of the respondents

S. No.	Group name	Category Name	Responsible	
			Number	**Percent (%)**
A	faith related in science	Yes	195	77.3
B	and technology	No	58	22.7
	Total		253	100

Looking at the above table, it is known that maximum 77.3 percent respondents were found in favor of faith in science and technology, while 22.7 percent respondents were such that their attitude in some form or the other was in opposition. In conclusion, it can be said that there is a lot of change in the logical outlook of women and most of the women are becoming aware that

science and technology are the most effective way to solve our problems and build strong women.

7. Classification based on Information about women and rural development schemes

S. No.	Group name	Category Name	Responsible	
			Number	**Percent (%)**
A	Information related to	Yes	85	33.3
B	various scheme	No	168	66.7
	Total		253	100

It is clear from the table that 33.3 percent of the selected respondents know about 1-2 schemes related to women and rural development, while 66.7 percent of the respondents are aware of more than 2 schemes. No respondent has been found who is not aware of even a single scheme. In conclusion, women are very aware about themselves and are trying to make themselves capable and upgrade their social and economic status.

Among the respondents included in the study, in response to the question related to setting priority in choosing a life partner, maximum 68.5 percent personal qualification and 21 percent education and 10.5 percent such respondents were found giving priority to other situations. In conclusion, a lot of vigilance is being seen in women regarding the decisions related to the selection of life partner. Similarly some other questions like dowry consent 15.5 percent and 84.5 percent answer in favor of to a relate remained in the opposition. In conclusion, women today are able to decide It is not that dowry is a social evil and it should end. 'The questions asked from the respondents involved in the study, the husband helped the wife in daily work and got to see a lot of positive thoughts in favor of blood donation. In conclusion, along with the use of ICT, today women are seen standing in support of discrimination between right and wrong and equality of men and women, which indicates even more positive results in the future.

In the form of an open-ended question, the respondents involved in the study were asked about their views on the advantages and disadvantages of information and communication technology, to which the researchers found very positive answers. On the other hand, in response to the question related to the source of current knowledge of the respondent, T.V., radio, mobile, news, magazines

Conclusion

Today, women's access to ICT seems to be possible, due to which their level of knowledge has been boosted and ICT not only paves the way for women's development and progress paves the way but appears to make them more aware, excited, self-confident, strong. Today she has been helpful in keeping her A side. She has been able to make her mark in all those fields where the dominance of men has been established. In the end, the untiring efforts of government and non-governmental organizations to provide information and communication technology for the empowerment of rural women and the success of the technological age can be seen in the

independent thoughts and practical activities of rural women. In this way a change in this direction can be expected in the future through ICT. The helpful contribution of ICT interventions can be seen as initiatives of the present golden age of women empowerment. The coming tomorrow in this golden age can be even better if more innovations are encouraged in it and it is made easier and more accessible to the rural women.

General overview of the researcher:

During the researcher's observation of the study, it became evident that there are still certain sensitive social issues that women hesitate to openly express their opinions about due to societal pressures that persist to this day.

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