

TO STUDY THE EMPOWERMENT IN WOMEN STUDENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH ICT

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ABSTRACT

People and societies are at the heart of development. It is not a question of money or capital, but of a society's ability to nurture its citizens' creativity, to free and empower them to use their intelligence and individual and communal efforts to improve their quality of life. “ A better quality of life necessitates equal access to opportunity and social fairness for all members of society, including the affluent and poor, urban and rural, men and women, privileged and disadvantaged. Any development strategy that does not take gender into account is seen as inefficient and self-defeating. People are both the ends and the means in development because it is a human-centered process. Both women and men benefit from human resource development. Even though women play an equal role in the long-term sustainability of development around the world, the benefits of development are allocated unequally between men and women. Gender equality and fairness are emerging as important concerns as human development takes centre stage in the global development discussion. Despite the fact that much has been written and debated on this subject, gender discrimination is one of the most pervasive types of institutionalised deprivation. Unfortunately, our own country, India, is no exception.

KEYWORD: Poor, Urban, Rural, Deprivation, Societies, Self-Defeating

1. INTRODUCTION

"Unless women's status improves, there is no chance for the welfare of society." A bird cannot effectively fly with just one wing. (quoted in Mandal, R. & Ete, M., 2010) Swami Vivekanad. People and societies are the focus of development. The ability of a society to foster its members' creativity,

free and enable them to use their intelligence, and support their individual and group endeavors to improve their quality of life is more important than financial resources. Better possibilities and social justice for all facets of society—rich and poor, urban and rural, men and women, wealthy and disadvantaged—are also necessary for a higher quality of life. Any developmental approach that does not take gender into account as a category is viewed as inefficient and counterproductive. People are both the means and the ends of "development," since it is a human-centered process. Both men and women are equally affected by human resource development. Though the benefits of development are not equally shared by men and women, women play an equal part in the sustainability of development worldwide. Gender equality and fairness are becoming significant issues as human development takes center stage in the global development discussion. Even though there has been much discussion and debate on this topic, gender discrimination is one of the most widespread types of institutionalized deprivation, despite being one of the subtlest. Regretfully, India is not an exception to this rule.

Therefore, it is important to work toward empowering women and bringing forth some solutions in order to better their overall status. (2007, Lalneihzovi)

To create an egalitarian human society, women must be empowered and treated equally. Societies cannot thrive if half of their people's skills are suppressed. Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, India's first prime minister, famously remarked, "You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at its women's status." The September 2000 Millennium Summit in New York endorsed the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment as a key Millennium Development Goal.

1.1 AN OVERVIEW OF WOMEN IN INDIA

Language, religion, ethnic group, race, caste, and geopolitical status are only a few of the many diverse aspects of India's rich cultural legacy. Over the ages, it has witnessed a flood of diverse populations from all over the world, some of whom have made this place their home and become natives. However, there is a special similarity among women in that regard. As evidenced by the Devi Sukta song in the Rigveda, women's status in India witnessed the splendor and pinnacles of Devi and Rishika. In its broad, seeming sense, the sukta is the Devi's declaration of her own strength, splendor, omnipresence, and deeds. Unfortunately, being Abala (powerless) has also been a low point for the Devi(s) in India. Thus, our nation, India, witnessed the decline from the fame and wealth of being the "Vishwa Guru" and the "Bird with wings

of gold" to becoming an impoverished, oppressed, and enslaved country. The two undoubtedly demonstrate a connection between their fates.

Equal rights for women in the areas of education, politics, religion, property, and inheritance were observed during the Vedic era. Women were treated with respect and dignity in all spheres of life—religious, social, political, and economic—during the Vedic era. Women's education was promoted, and a lady who was destined to learn was called "Yajnopavitini." Great Rishis' wives were encouraged to participate in scholarly debates. Women were allowed to participate in religious tasks and rites, attend significant meetings, and become priests. Together, men and women offered the worship, demonstrating their equal standing. Women made notable contributions to politics, science, music, and the arts. The title 'Grihalakshmi' was used to honor them. The vedic woman was the pinnacle of Hindu womanhood, according to Ramesh Chunder Dutt's History of Civilization in Ancient India. Perhaps more than any other ancient nation in the world, women were valued in ancient India. They were regarded as their husbands' intellectual colleagues, devoted companions on life's journey, and indispensable collaborators in religious responsibilities. During the Vedic era, women were accorded a standing on par with men. While scholars like Sulaba, Maitreyee, Vachaknave, Lilavati, and Khaana were renowned astronomers and mathematicians, Gargi, Godha, Apala, Lopamudra, Vishwavara, Arundhati, and others were learned women. The age range for marriage was 14–17 years old. Well-educated girls could select their life mate. "Swayamwara," which was a widely recognized method of choosing the groom in Kshatriya communities. In every aspect of life, women were treated with the respect they deserved. During the Vedic era, they were exempt from all of the wonderful laws of a compassionate community.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

These days, women's empowerment and ICT are significant issues. They are both connected to human development and education in some way. Enough research has been done on ICTs and women's empowerment thus far, and these studies make obvious the significance that ICTs play. However, the majority of research conducted to date has been conceptual or project-based, and it has shown that providing education or training in ICT skills has an impact on the empowerment of a specific set of women. The majority of research on women in various circumstances has been conducted abroad.

India is a man-centered nation where women continue to have a significant position. The field of knowledge is continuously developing and situations are getting more difficult in the ever-changing world of today. Any research that has been conducted in India to lessen the obstacles in the areas of empowerment and ICT has not been able to resolve them. In order to empower women through ICTs, more work needs to be done in this field.

It's a common misconception that women's empowerment is lower in rural than in metropolitan regions. In India, the majority of studies have focused on rural women. While it is true that women in rural regions lack empowerment, this does not imply that urban women are fully empowered or do not require empowerment.

The female students enrolled in academic and professional programs in four regions of Uttar Pradesh are the focus of this study. The study focuses on how ICTs are now being used to empower women.

Additionally, an attempt is being made to determine which areas of empowerment they are utilizing ICTs for. The researcher thinks that the study's findings will play a significant part in illustrating the different facets of women's empowerment and how ICTs might strengthen it.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In their work, Malhotra, A., Schuler, S. R., & Boender, C. (2002) try to describe the most promising methodological ways to measure and analyze women's empowerment. They took a few actions. In order to summarize and conceptualize women's empowerment, they first examine the main streams of theoretical, methodological, and empirical literature on the subject from the disciplines of economics, sociology, anthropology, and demography. They chose the widely utilized components of empowerment, including economic, sociocultural, familial/interpersonal, legal, political, and psychological, in order to establish multidimensionality and existing frameworks for measuring empowerment from a universalist perspective. Gathering evidence from empirical research is the third step. The process component of empowerment was not measured in the great majority of empirical investigations. Furthermore, macro-level research frequently lacks a pertinent conceptual framework and is particularly poor at quantifying agency. Though much more work is needed in this area, household level studies have made great strides in conceptualizing broader, context-specific frameworks and in identifying indicators that can be said to capture aspects of agency. The final step was to recommend a roadmap for measuring women's empowerment. One significant shortcoming

was the relative dearth of thorough research on policy and programmatic efforts, as well as the absence of empirical study at "meso" levels.

A rich and comprehensive conceptual framework with conceptual factors and a set of metrics that can be used as a lens to assess a country's readiness and needs in terms of information and communication technology (ICT) education was looked at by Guruvadoo, P. (2003). In order to provide an integrated conceptual model for ICT education and ICT industry for development, this study transformed the human capacity component of the United Nations Development Program Markle Foundation's conceptual framework of the components of the development dynamic model into a model for ICT education.

In 2006, Ghufuran and Bisht created the Women Empowerment Scale. There are 24 items on the Likert-type scale, with 5 representing "strongly agree," 4 representing "agree," 3 representing "undecided," 2 representing "disagree," and 1 representing "strongly disagree" for each positive phrase. The scoring system is reversed for negative comments. 46 items were either produced by the researcher in cooperation with specialists or gathered from the literature based on theoretical interpretations of women's empowerment. Eighteen judges, who were senior psychology and education teachers, were handed these objects. Eight items were eliminated because the judges deemed them to be either unrelated to women's empowerment or had very low inter-judgment consistency. The scale's initial draft contained the remaining components. In the sample of 200 women between the ages of 25 and 45, the items were examined using the t-test on a 25% lower and 25% upper group. The test-retest reliability after a six-week break was 0.71, and the split-half reliability was 0.78.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To study the empowerment in women students of higher education through ICTs.
2. To compare Personal, Social & Cultural, Educational, Psychological, economical and Political & Legal dimensions of Empowerment in women students through ICTs with reference to:
3. To study the empowerment through ICTs in women students in higher education with reference to the levels of their use of ICTs.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Type of Research:

The goal of the current study was to comprehend how information and communication technology contributes to women's empowerment in higher education. Descriptive research, then. Descriptive research using a quantitative method (approach) was employed. Descriptive research focuses on the present and aims to ascertain the current state of the phenomena being studied. The primary feature of this study is that the researcher can only describe what is occurring; he has no control over the variables. The purpose of descriptive research investigations is to gather accurate and relevant data about the state of phenomena today and to make sound generalizations and inferences based on the facts gathered.

Research method:

Given the nature of the current study, the researcher has chosen to use the survey method for descriptive research because it allows for elegant data collecting.

By interviewing a small number of people, the descriptive survey method focuses on "gathering information" about a vast number of people. Sampling and the most precise and thorough description of the variables and techniques are key components of descriptive survey research. Due to the demands of the research project, the researcher employed the survey method with standardized tools to gather quantitative data for the study.

5. RESULT AND DATA INTERPRETATION

To study the Use of ICTs in women students of higher education.

Table No. - 5.1 Use of Gadget

S. No.	Items	Never		Occasionally		Regularly	
		N	Percentage	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
1	Television	0	0%	7	3.75%	193	96.25%
2	Telephone	98	49%	57	28.5%	45	22.5%
3	Mobile	0	0%	15	7.5%	185	92.50%
4	Smartphone	0	0%	28	13.75%	172	86.25%

5	I-pod	95	47.5%	77	38.75%	28	13.75%
6	Tablet	93	46.75%	63	31.5%	44	21.75%
7	Laptop/pc	11	5.75%	132	65.75%	57	28.50%
8	Fax	134	66.75%	45	22.75%	21	10.5%
9	Scanner	10	4.75%	159	79.50%	31	15.75%
10	Printer	0	0%	132	65.75%	68	34.25%
11	Radio	0	0%	57	28.75%	143	71.25%
12	E-Book Reader	115	57.75%	57	28.25%	28	14%

According to the data in Table 4.1, 96.25% of the female students in the study's higher education program reported using television on a regular basis, 3.75% said they use it occasionally, and none of the female students reported never using television.

Of the 200 female students, 22.50% reported using their landline phone on a regular basis, 28.50% stated they use it occasionally, and 49.00% claimed they never use an answering machine.

Of the 200 students who participated in this study, 92.50% reported using their mobile phones regularly, while 7.50% said they use them occasionally. No student out of the 200 claimed never using a mobile phone.

According to the aforementioned data, 86.50% of the 200 female students in the survey reported using their smartphones regularly, 13.75% said they used them occasionally, and no female students were found to never use them.

According to the above table, 13.75% of the 200 female students stated that they use their iPods on a regular basis, 38.75% said they use them occasionally, and 47.50% claimed they never use them.

According to the above table, 21.75% of the 200 female college students use tablets on a regular basis, 31.50% use them occasionally, and 46.75% never use them.

Regarding the 200 female students, 28.50% reported using their laptops or PCs on a regular basis, 65.75% claimed they use them occasionally, and 5.75% stated they never use them.

Of the 400 female students surveyed, 10.50% reported using fax machines frequently, 22.75% reported using them occasionally, and 66.75% stated they never use them.

According to the data above, of the 200 female students in the study, 15.75% reported using Scanner frequently, 79.50% said they used it occasionally, and 4.75% said they never used it. All 400 female college students utilize printers, as seen in the above table. Of these, 34.25% use the printer rarely, while 65.75% use it frequently.

All of them make use of the radio. Of these, 71.25% use it frequently, while the remaining 28.75% use it infrequently.

According to the information gathered, when it comes to using an e-book reader Of the 200 female students in higher education, 57.75% never use it. Of these, 14% said they use it frequently, compared to 28.25% who use it occasionally.

Table No. - 5.2 Use of Print Media

S. No.	Items	Never		Occasionally		Regular	
		N	Percentage	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
1	News papers	0	0%	53	26.5%	147	73.5%
2	Books	0	0%	0	0%	200	100%
3	Magazines	0	0%	125	62.25%	75	37.75%
4	Journals	56	28%	74	37.25%	70	34.75%

All 200 female college students utilize the News Paper, as shown in Table 5.2. Of these, 26.5% use the News Paper occasionally, while 73.5% use it frequently.

All 200 of the kids in the study regularly use books, according to the findings.

Regarding the magazines, they all make use of it. Of these, 62.25% use it occasionally, while 37.75% use it frequently.

According to the statistics gathered, 28% of the 400 female students enrolled in higher education never use journals. Of them, 34.75% said they use it frequently, whilst 37.25% said they use it occasionally.

Table No. - 5.3**Use of Information Sharing Tool**

S. No.	Items	Never		Occasionally		Regular	
		N	Percentage	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
1	E-mail	0	0%	53	26.5%	147	73.5%
2	Audio Call	0	0%	7	3.5%	193	96.5%
3	Video Call	8	4.25%	32	16.25%	159	79.5%
4	Conferencing	23	11.5%	141	70.75%	35	17.75%
5	MMS/SMS	0	0%	22	11.25%	177	88.75%
6	Helpline Numbers	12	6%	113	56.5%	75	37.5%
7	SHAREit	8	4%	40	20%	152	76%
8	Bluetooth	5	2.5%	69	34.5%	126	63%

According to the data in Table 5.3, 73.5% of the female students in the study's higher education program reported using email on a regular basis, while 26.5% said they use it occasionally. No female student was found to have reported not using email at all.

According to the aforementioned data, 96.5% of the 200 female students in the survey reported using Audio Call on a regular basis, 3.5% said they used it rarely, and no female students were found to never use it.

Regarding video calls, 79.5% of the 200 female students reported using them frequently, 16.25% said they use them occasionally, and 4.25% said they never use them.

According to the above table, out of the 400 female students, 17.75% reported using Conference frequently, 70.75% said they use it occasionally, and 11.5% claimed they never use it. Of the 200 students who participated in this study, 88.75% reported using MMS/SMS regularly, while

11.25% said they use it occasionally. No student was found to have never used MMS/SMS when asked about its use.

According to the above table, 37.5% of the 200 female college students use the Helpline Number on a regular basis, 56.5% use it occasionally, and 6% never use it.

According to SHAREit, 76% of female college students frequently use the helpline number. Four percent said they never use it, whilst 20% said they use it occasionally.

Out of 200 female students in higher education, 2.5 percent never use Bluetooth, according to the data gathered. Sixty-three percent said they use it frequently, compared to 34.5% who use it occasionally.

6. CONCLUSION

The most effective tool available to alter the current state of the world is information and communication technology. It is a key that enhances a person's whole existence. ICT can be a potent weapon for women to overcome prejudice, attain complete equality, well-being, and participation in decisions that affect their lives and the future of their communities, according to Hilbert, M. (2011). It suggests that ICT is a potent instrument that significantly affects women's empowerment. Women's empowerment has been acknowledged as a key factor in determining their status. The active process of empowering women to recognize their own identity and strength in every area of life is known as empowerment. In a knowledge-based society like India, women's empowerment entails improving their capacity and skill development to understand issues that affect them, giving them the chance to get past institutional and social barriers, and bolstering their involvement in political and economic activities in order to improve their lives overall. Women are essential to the development of families, communities, and society in India and other emerging nations. But women are frequently ignored and silenced. The difficulties of living in extreme poverty are more difficult for women than for men, yet these women are not included in discussions since they are frequently illiterate, insecure, and immobile. Even people who lack skills, are illiterate, have limited mobility, and lack confidence can communicate directly and interactively thanks to ICT. Certain facets of life, particularly for women, are directly impacted by ICT. ICT and women's empowerment are therefore closely intertwined. In the current environment, ICT is helping women to grow and improve their quality of life. This study aims to investigate and examine in detail how women students in higher education use ICTs and how it contributes to their empowerment.

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