



## ROLE OF ICT IN SKILL DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN FARMERS: A CASE STUDY OF VIJAYAPURA

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### ABSTRACT

*In this era of Information and Communication Technology, it is indeed interesting to know how much is the digital format being accepted by the agricultural community, especially the women. Digital Media is a storehouse of everything and anything under the Sun, hence it is serving to be a great support for the masses for information seeking related activities. Through this study, the researcher wanted to find out the reach of ICT tools among the women farmers. The study has been done using questionnaire to understand the level of ICT Skills the women farmers have and their extent in farming activities.*



**KEYWORDS :** *Information and Communication Technology , women farmers , farming activities.*

### INTRODUCTION:

It is the era of Digital India. Various ICT tools are used to educate and inform the rural people. For generations, rural people have been living in complete isolation without much access to modern media of communication. The development of a society largely depends on the access to information. Even though we live in the modern era, today, in the rural areas, women are suffering from various problems such as less accessibility to modern information sources.

Agriculture plays a very important role in rural and national development. There is a strong relationship between gender and agriculture. Several women experience a life that is a complex web of multiple roles and multi task. Women especially those in the rural areas are extensively involved in serious farm operation and agricultural activities. Women make up over half the agricultural labor force yet they are frequently subject to discrimination. They play a vital but unrecognized and unsupported role in food production. In most states, investment in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have focused mainly on the urban areas although ICTs have a great potential to help meet the needs of rural female farmers and to benefit rural communities.

Looking at the information needs of rural women in, Unomah (1998) posits that rural people need information on how to apply fertilizers in the farm, preservation of harvested crops, and marketing of the farm produce. Information is essential for facilitating agricultural and rural development and bringing about social and economic change. Information initiatives and policies should therefore be tailored towards strengthening the grass roots, with special emphasis on women, and be developed in places without public libraries or other information resources.

Women in State of engage in various farming activities such as planting, weeding, hoeing, harvesting, threshing and winnowing of agricultural products as well as the processing, storage and marketing of these farm produce.

Information and communication technology (ICT), which generally refers to a range of communication systems, devices, applications, and services (such as mobile phones, computers, and the internet), offers powerful tools to change and foster new economic opportunities for women. It can also be particularly effective in loosening constraints on women in enterprise development. However, women lag behind men in access to technology and use ICT differently. Understanding why can help leverage ICT to help women's businesses. ICT is a fast-changing area that can provide opportunities to catalyze women's participation in the economy. The role of the internet, use of mobile phones, increased affordability of ICT, and new opportunities associated with business process outsourcing models are just a few examples of the evolving landscape. At the same time, barriers to women's access and use of ICT should be recognized and reduced so that advances in ICT do not widen gender disparities.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Unomah (1998) asserted that rural people need information on how to apply fertilizer in the farm, preservation of harvested crops, weaving, hair plaiting, good source of drinking water, but most available local information is packaged in a raw form and therefore difficult to access or use .

Rathgeber (2000) said that the importance of information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for rural farmers cannot be under estimated; the telephone for example, according to ICTs in this information age help to break down the isolation of individuals living in remote rural areas .

Santra and Kundu, (2001) Farm women should be fully aware of the latest agricultural technologies so as to achieve faster development in agriculture. The transfer of technology approach which mainly includes mass media is not paying much attention towards dissemination of adequate and timely agricultural information to the farm women.

Bonder (2002) women's access to ICT is part of her human rights: Relating or connecting getting access to, and ownership of ICT, with the struggle against poverty, unemployment, violence, racism and discrimination and the consolidation of democracy and economic growth. This would elevate the importance of their participation in ICT programs.

Solomon (2002) asserted that, Information need is the basic need and cannot be undermined. Information can help individuals take appropriate decisions.

Sorenson (2002) Studies which seek to establish instances and patterns of ICT inclusion and exclusion only highlight if women are included or excluded from ICTs – they do not necessarily indicate the social dynamics of gender (in) equality in society more generally. Widespread (physical) access to and use of web-enabled ICTs does not necessarily enhance women's positions to become equal to that of men.

Mahmood and Sheikh (2005) stated that creation of awareness is the first step towards the adoption process. Mass media (electronic & print media) are playing very important role in creating awareness about new agricultural technologies among farmers.

Md. Salleh Hassan et al (2011) Analysis employed has specifically informed that slightly more than half of the respondents (50.1%) have moderately received agriculture information from mass media sources.

### RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

- \* To assess the ICT habit among women farmers.
- \* To know the time given to each media by women.
- \* To find out how ICT has helped women farmers.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

This study aims to find out the time given to ICT by women and to find out the popular media among women farmers. This study has used multi stage sampling consisting of 120 women farmers and pre-tested questionnaire was used for collection of information. The study was conducted in Vijayapura district of Karnataka in October 2017.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Table- 1: Number of respondents**

Age	Number of Respondents	Percentage
18-35	58	48.33%
36-55	43	35.84%
55 Above	19	15.83%
Total	120	100.00

Table 1 reveals that majority of the respondents i.e., 58 (48.33%) belongs to age group of 18-35 years, followed by 43 (35.84%) for 36-55 years. 19 (15.83%) of the respondents belong to the age group of 55 and above. Hence, it can be seen that the maximum women farmers belong to the young age group of [18-35]

**Table: 2: Marital status of respondents**

Marital status	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Unmarried	13	10.83%
Married	55	45.84%
Widow	23	19.16%
Divorce	29	24.17%
Total	120	100.00

From the above table, it can be seen that the maximum number of respondents are married. There are 55 (45.84%) are married followed by Divorcee 29 (24.17%) and Widow 23(19.16%). It can be concluded that majority of the women farmers (widow, divorcee and unmarried) 65 (54.16%) do not have their partners and are carrying out farming business on their own.

**Table No.3: Education of the respondents**

Education	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Uneducated	13	10.83%
Primary	55	45.83%
High school	27	22.06%
College	25	20.82%
Total	120	100.00

From the above table, it can be seen that the maximum number of respondents have received education till primary i.e. 55 (45.83%) followed by High School 27 (22.06%) College 25 (20.82%) and only 13 (10.83%) respondent is illiterate. Therefore, we can conclude that most of the women farmers have received education.

**Table No.4: Annual Income of the respondents**

Income	Number of Respondents	Percentage
11,000 to 1 lakh	46	38.33%
1 lakh to 2 lakh	50	41.67%
More than two lakhs	24	20.00%
Total	120	100.00

From the above table, it can be seen that the maximum number of respondents 24 (20%) have the annual income of more than two lakhs, followed by 50 (41.67%) have annual income between 1 lakh to 2 lakhs. 46 (38.33%) respondents earn in between 11,000 to 1 lakh. Hence, it can be seen that majority of the women farmers earn around 1 lakh to 2 lakh per annum.

**Table No.5: Media Usage of Respondents**

Media	Number of Respondents	Total Media Users
News papers	11	09.16%
Television	31	25.83%
Internet	26	21.67%
Mobile	118	98.33%

From the above table, it can be seen that the maximum number of respondents 118 (98.33%) own Mobile, followed by 31(25.83%) have television at their Home, Internet 26 (21.67%), Newspapers 11(9.16%). Hence, it can be said that Mobile is the most used medium for communication.

**Table No. 6: Usage of Mobile by the respondents**

Usage	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	103	85.83%
No	17	14.17%
Total	120	100.00

From the above table, it can be seen that the maximum number of respondents 103 (85.83%) use Mobile, Followed by 17 (14.17%) do not use. Hence, it can be concluded that maximum people use mobile, but 17 members do not use because of financial problems.

**Table No.7: No. of Hours Mobile is Used**

Duration	Number of Respondents	Percentage
One hour	42	35.50%
2-3 Hour	37	31.35%
More than 3 hours	39	33.15%
Total	118	100.00

From the above table, it can be seen that the maximum number of respondents 42 (35.50%) use mobile for one hour, followed by 39 (33.15%) use more than 3 hours and 37 (31.35%) use mobile two to three hours. Hence, it can be said that maximum women farmers use mobile for an hour or so.

**Table No.8: Usage of Internet**

Frequency	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Every day	13	50.00%
Every now and then	11	42.31%
Very rare	2	07.69%
Total	26	100.00

From the above table, it can be seen that the maximum number of respondents 13 (50.00%) use Internet everyday followed by every now and then 11 (42.31%) and 2 (07.69%) From Table no. 5, it was evident that only 26 members use Internet, so the frequency of usage among the 26 members reveals that women farmers in Vijayapura are utilising internet services everyday.

**Table No. 9: No. of Hours Internet is Used**

Duration	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1 hour	12	46.16%
2-3 hour	10	38.46%
More than 3 hours	4	15.38%
Total	26	100.00

From the above table, it can be seen that the maximum number of respondents 12 (46.16%) use internet for one hour, followed by 10 (38.46%) respondents use for 2-3 hours and 4 (15.38%) use for more than three hours. Hence, it can be concluded that on an average women farmers use internet for an hour daily!

**Table No. 10: Media suitable for accessing Agricultural Information**

Media	Number of Respondents accessing for Agricultural Information	Total Media Users
Newspaper	10	11
Television	29	31
Mobile	80	118
Internet	20	26

From table no. 5, the usage of media for Women farmers can be seen. The above table shows the number of respondents among the total number of users for particular media, utilising the above mentioned media for accessing information related to agriculture. Maximum number of users among all the media users, use the mass media for accessing agricultural information.

**Table No. 11: Knowledge about ICT**

Age	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	80	66.66%
No	40	33.34%
Total	120	100.00

From the above table, it can be seen that the maximum number of respondents 80 (66.66%) have the knowledge of ICT and 40 (33.34%) do not have the knowledge, irrespective of their media usage.

Maximum women farmers have the knowledge that communicational technology can be utilised for gaining better information about anything.

**Table No. 12: Respondents who mentioned that ICT has been useful for Agricultural information**

Age	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	107	89.16%
No	13	10.84%
Total	120	100.00

From the above table, it can be seen that the maximum number of respondents 107 (89.16%) have responded by saying that ICT is of great help in collecting agricultural information and 13 (10.84%) respondents mentioned otherwise.

**Table No. 13: How has ICT helped in Agricultural Development?**

Different Sectors	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Fertilizer	16	13.33%
Irrigation	15	12.05 %
Agricultural Market	41	34.17%
Agricultural Equipments	30	25.00%
Usage of Pesticides	13	10.83%
Others	5	04.17 %
Total	120	100.00

From the above table, it can be seen that the maximum number of respondents 41(34.17%) feel that ICT has helped them in areas like Agriculture market, Agricultural Equipments 30 (25%), Fertilizer 16 (13.33%), Irrigation 15 (12.5%), Pesticides 13 (10.83%) and in other areas 5 (4.17%).

**Table No. 14: Has ICT empowered you?**

Empowerment	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	68	63.56%
No	39	36.44%
Total	107	100.00

From the above table, it can be seen 68 (63.56%) respondents feel it has empowered them with respect to agricultural information regarding Government schemes, agricultural materials and weather conditions, whereas 39 (36.44%) feel it has not empowered them in anyway.

**CONCLUSION**

It is very interesting to observe in a semi- rural area like Vijayapura, the usage of internet and mobile has been quite commendable. The role of ICT, therefore cannot be denied. ICT has been helping women farmers, in this area for collecting information. Hence, the Government and NGO’s should make use of this opportunity more, so that more and more farming community can avail the benefits. Here, it is necessary to mention that the usage of ICT is not only limited to internet but other mass media tools as well.

It is very interesting to observe in some of the rural areas, the use of Mobile is more. Internet is also equally popular in rural areas. A new species of pepper was discovered in the Internet and the whole

community is now into the production of such cash crop. This shows that the significance of ICTs can never be over emphasized. The rural farmers were made to know about the activities of the were compelled to form Rural Farmers Agricultural and through this unions, most of them have benefited from agricultural loans and the distribution of fertilizers and other farm implements by the state government.

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