

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes the major findings and discusses the perceptions of the Self Help Group women on ICT usage and the difficulties in the access to ICT in Tamilnadu. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are for everyone and women have to be equal beneficiaries of the advantages offered by technology, and the products and processes which emerge from its use.

5.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The promotion of women's SHGs is seen as an effective means to empower poor women, and enable them to participate in and drive their own development. SHGs are now recognized as a key transmission belt for development efforts by the state and civil society. Such village level collectives are a preferred institutional mechanism, because they are gender sensitive, participatory, cost-effective and grassroots organizations.

5.2 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Women are equal beneficiaries of the advantages offered by technology, and the products and processes, which are the by products of the use of technology. However, it should not be confined to an elite group of society, but flow to the other segments of women in Indian society. The study wanted to know about the infrastructure (social, economical, educational, etc)

available to SHGs women and social freedom and opportunities in rural areas. The applicability may invite government intervention to stop the digital divide among women, and also to more empowerment for women with ICT usage. Everywhere the potential exists for the media to make a far greater contribution to the advancement of women. There are numerous possibilities for ICTs to improve women's economic activities in the fields of trade, governance, education, health, crafts, and employment both in the formal as well as the informal sector. ICTs bring a lot of opportunities to women in the work situations and small businesses.

The present study attempts to examine the growth of Self Help Group women, when information communication technology is used as a support for their development. The present study has been conducted with the following objectives.

- i) To study the impact of training provided to Self Help Group women on information and communication technology.
- ii) To know the level of knowledge of information and communication technology among Self Help Group women.
- iii) To study the difficulties faced by them in using information communication technology and find out the medium to create awareness among Self Help Group women.
- iv) To develop a model to overcome this digital divide.

The study aimed to answer the following research questions:

- i) To what extent do the Self Help Group women seek to use a computer, mobile, or any other ICT tool?
- ii) What is the relationship between the educational levels of the Self Help Group women and the use of the ICT tool?

- iii) What exactly is new about the access and use of ICT, compared to other sources of information?
- iv) What is the level of ICT knowledge and how has it benefited the Self Help Group women? Is there a need for media to bridge the gap?
- v) What are the barriers for the Self Help Group women in accessing Internet Technology?

To find out the answers for the above research questions, the variables have been analyzed for its relation to other variables. With a view to analyzing the relationship between the age group, literacy level of the self help group members, typing skills and computer knowledge to start a kiosk after training, earn profit through a kiosk, sources of information, need for computer training, the following null hypotheses were framed and tested. Self Help Group women of age group 18-35 after undergoing 12 days' residential training have the confidence to start a kiosk on their own. They felt that they are confident of earning profit if there started a kiosk; they also felt that computer training is essential to start a kiosk. The pre and post training questionnaire also showed that irrespective of their educational qualification ,the respondents were confident of starting a kiosk and earning profit; they felt that training is a prerequisite to start a kiosk.

Contrary to the general thinking that typing skills will reduce the need for computer training the respondents felt that training is necessary even if typing is known. Typing skills alone cannot give them much confidence to start a kiosk or operate it to earn profit.

5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The members of the women Self Help Groups in Tamil Nadu are functioning well; the members were from different educational backgrounds with varied employment and from varied income groups. The self help group women members were invariably watching television, which is the primary medium through which they get their information.

The following are some of the major findings of the study:

- It is found that the Self Help Group member household's main source of information is Television.
- The majority of the Self Help Group members feel that the TV is the most useful medium through which they get the information.
- The majority of the Self Help Group members face problems with landline telecommunication facility
- Lack of training is the major problem for the improvement of the SHGs.
- Lack of education is the major problem faced by the respondents in their villages.
- Majority of the respondents use mobile phones
- It is found that the majority of the respondents do not use a computer, and most of them are willing to learn to use a computer.
- More than 90% of the respondents, irrespective of their age group, are interested to start kiosk after training.

- Most of the respondents' opinion is that the village requires computers to get information on health and Government services.
- The level of education and the media are important barriers to there access to Internet technology by the Self Help Group members.

The majority of self help group women felt that they should be provided with technical and financial support to start kiosk. They also felt that job orders should be ensured by the government or NGOs for them to earn profit. The majority of the members of the SHG can train others after their training in ICT. The majority of the respondents go in person, or use the telephone to communicate with the Government authorities.

5.4 SUGGESTIONS

The members were not much aware of the ICT tools and their benefits. It is therefore concluded that Television is an important medium to be used to create awareness of ICT among the SHG members. Sometimes, the Magazines and newspaper advertisements may also create awareness among the members who are using these media to get information.

There has been a great deal of interest in the potential benefits that community networking may offer the developing world. This is particularly true of rural information and communication technology (ICT) projects that seek to bring emerging technologies like low cost computing and Internet access to rural households, social institutions and governments.

Furthermore, there is 'one-size fits all' design for ICT networks; communities, greatly in their social, economic, and political organization, and therefore information needs, and the design are the most appropriate and

relevant community networking system, which varies from place to place and over time within a given area. For successful community networking, the design and implementation of projects should be driven by the specific needs of communities.

There is a large need (and by extension, market) for basic communication services in the rural areas of this region. ICTs are currently used primarily for news, entertainment and communication with family and friends. Rural households, even the poor, are willing to spend significant portions of their income on communication and media. In fact, need and circumstance, not income, seem to be the primary determinants of ICT usage and expenditure. The implications of this demand (and the fact that even poor people are willing to spend) are threefold.

ICT interventions may start their operations by first focusing on providing basic communication and information services rather than more sophisticated applications. Two, kiosk services can be provided more cheaply than currently available, and the kiosks can improve the standard of living for the poor; less expensive access will directly impact disposable incomes. Three, this demand and the willingness to pay show promise for the economic sustainability of such projects.

The opportunities to improve agricultural technical efficiency through ICT kiosks are more, but do not support the investment of resources in methods to enhance efficiency. Despite greater access to ICT, farmers also have information needs that, if met effectively, may have substantial impacts on their well-being and agricultural productivity. There is a demand (and market) for expert advice. Improvements in technical efficiency require information on agricultural pests and diseases, new seeds, and techniques. ICT kiosks may provide some of these extension services, and foster existing agricultural diffusion and support networks, especially where agricultural

extension has not been given a sufficiently high priority by government. Farmers suffer information and communication deficits. We cannot still predict if ICTs will be a sufficient, cost-effective, or appropriate answer to these problems. It is difficult to anticipate the ways in which farmers will appropriate the technology, or how will they harness the opportunity to make the ICTs work for them.

The potential of ICT for women in India is highly dependent upon their levels of technical skill and education, and is the principal requirement for accessing knowledge from the global pool. The government and NGOs need to impart technical education on the use of ICT as a part of both the formal and informal educational systems and to initiate distance learning and vocational courses.

In order to facilitate access for women from other classes and sectors, these intermediary organizations need to be strategically located in local institutions, to which women have open and equal access, such as health centers, women's NGOs, women's employment centers, libraries, women's studies departments and institutes, community centers etc.

Equitable access to ICT technology and the autonomy to receive and produce the information relevant to their concerns and perspectives are critical issues for women. They, therefore, need to be involved in decision-making regarding the development of new technology in order to participate fully in its growth and impact. Access and costs being some of the greatest barriers for ICT use, it is of the utmost importance to engage women and gender advocates in the policymaking process and dialogue. It is important to engender an ICT policy, to ensure that women, particularly rural and poor women, benefit from ICT. Gender must be considered from the start of the project design. Only then can ICT policies and projects properly

address the gender digital divide, and further contribute to women's economic empowerment.

It is important to view ICT as a tool to meet women's development needs, and accordingly all forms of ICT should be considered to determine which are more appropriate in a particular setting and for a particular programme. It is our responsibility to make technology work for the people and in many cases; this requires a gradual transition in ICT usage. It is also recommended that user friendly (cheaper) forms of open access software can be used in the training programme.

This research has helped the evolution of a conceptual model which describes the importance of low information, communication and technology should reach the grassroots in the following ways.

In the first stage self help group women should be given an Awareness of information and communication and technology tools; thereby making them understand the importance of ICT in the development of their livelihood, through short films and documentaries in television.

In the second stage interested and atleast higher secondary (10th) educated Self Help Group women should undergo a diploma course/certificate course in ICT through reputed institutions, preferably a regular or a part time course which can be sponsored by the government.

In the third stage the self help group women should be identified by their skills and given training to establish a kiosk.

In the forth stage the trained self help group women should be interviewed and again short listed for starting a kiosk of their own, where they are guided and monitored by the government/NGO.

Further, continuous monitoring and making them train other self help group women would lead to a prosperous India.

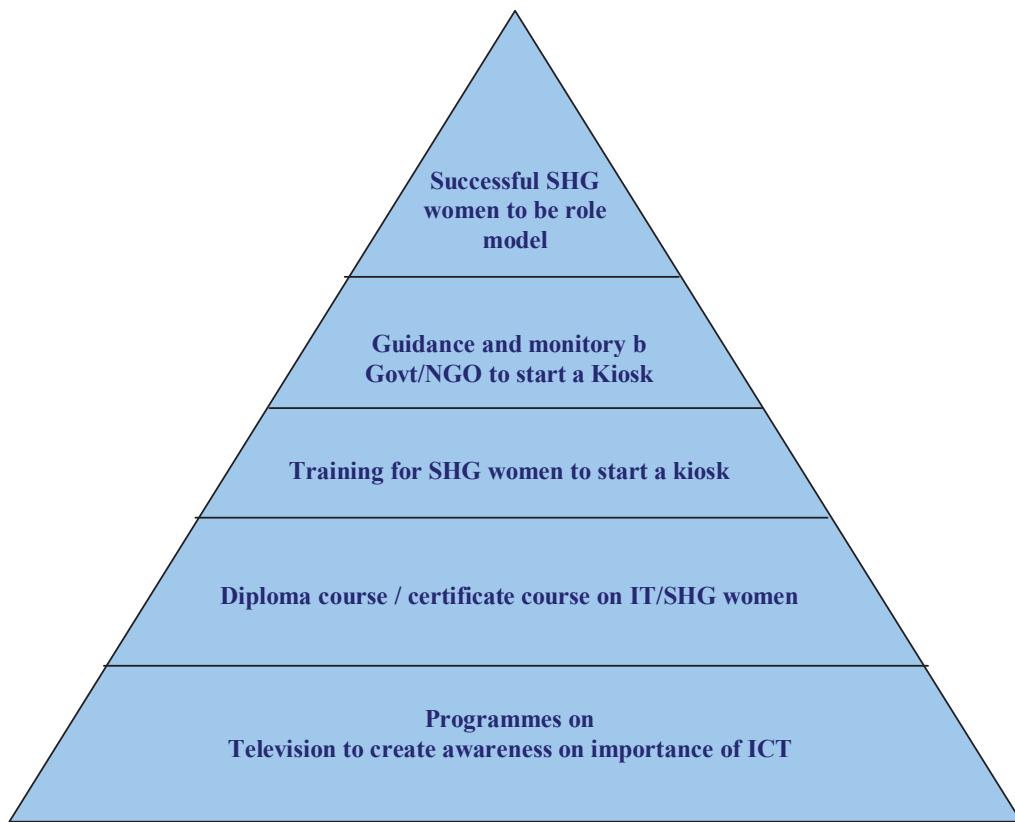


Figure 5.1 Conceptual model for self help group women to start information technology kiosk

5.5 CONCLUSION

There is immense potential for the ICT's to create new employment opportunities for the Self Help Group women, and to contribute significant gains in efficiency and effectiveness to Self Help Group women's enterprises. The radio (All India Radio) and Television disseminate a wide range of information relevant to socio-economic development, and these include agriculture, health, employment, environment, e-governance etc. Women who have access to these media have mostly benefited as passive recipients of generic information and advice.

The Government may take necessary steps to initiate the ICT awareness in the Self Help Group women, through the NGOs already established in the areas. The success stories of the SHG women who established kiosks may be shot as short films and telecast on TV, to reach the majority of the women because the people in the rural areas spend more time watching television. It will be a motivation to the SHG members, to learn from the success stories of other members, and increase their confidence level, which paves the way for improving the socio-economic life of the Self Help Group women.

5.6 SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY

The subject taken up for this study has a wide scope for further research.

- The present study considered the SHG women and ICT awareness; it can further expand to cover the ICT and economic empowerment of the SHG women.
- The study can evaluate the kiosks to be established by the SHG women in Tamilnadu and find out the actual needs for their growth and development.
- An evaluation of the Government programmes, assistance, Policies etc. relating to Women SHG, can be undertaken.
- A comparative study of the SHG women and their awareness of ICT in selected cities in Tamil Nadu, or two different states in India, can be carried out.
- An evaluation of the ICT projects implemented in Tamilnadu and the changing lifestyles of SHG women may be made.

APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A (Demographic)

1. Full name _____

2. Number of members of the household (Only those above eighteen)
Number

3. Age:
18-25 26-35
36-65 Above 65

4. Gender
i) Total number of male in the household
ii) Total number of female in the household

5. Education Qualification:
Primary High School
HSC Graduate

6. Employment status:
Self - Employed Home Maker Freelance Worker
Cooli Others

7. What is the average monthly income (In Rupees) of your house hold?
Below 2000 4000-6000
2000-4000 Above 6000

SECTION B (Sources of Information)

8. Which is the household's main source of information?

Newspaper	<input type="checkbox"/>	Television	<input type="checkbox"/>
Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>	Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Which medium do you like to spend more time why?

10. Which medium is most useful to you? (Rank 1-5)

Newspaper	<input type="checkbox"/>	Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Television	<input type="checkbox"/>
Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>	Magazine	<input type="checkbox"/>		

11. Rate which medium provides you more information? (Rank 1-5)

Newspaper	<input type="checkbox"/>	Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Television	<input type="checkbox"/>
Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>	Magazine	<input type="checkbox"/>		

12. Rate which medium provides you more entertainment? (Rank 1-5)

Newspaper	<input type="checkbox"/>	Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Television	<input type="checkbox"/>
Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>	Magazine	<input type="checkbox"/>		

13. Do you have a mobile or any one in your family has mobile?

Yes No

SECTION C (Computer Usage)

14. Do you use computer in your business?

Yes No Partially

15. How many computer centers are there in your village?

1-2	<input type="checkbox"/>	above 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
3-4	<input type="checkbox"/>	No computer centre	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. Have you any time accessed computer?

Yes No

17. Where have you seen the computer often used?

Bank Railways Government Offices
Others Specify

18. Do you like to learn computers?

Yes No

19. Do you have typing skill?

Yes No

20. If you are provided with training programme (given in computer) how it should be given?

Residential Daily Duration

Hands on experience: _____ 2 hours, _____ 4 hours

_____ 6 hours, _____ other s

21. Can you train others after completion of training?

Yes No

22. In what way government should help you in knowing about computers?

Training programmes

Awareness programmes on TV

Any other specify

23. Do you face any difficulties in accessing the available medium? (eg. TV, Radio)

Yes No

24. Is power supply available to your houses?

Yes No

25. How many hours you have power interruption in a day?
- No Power Cut 1-2 Hours
 3-4 hours more than 4 hours
26. If any problem is happening, what way you like to communicate to government authorities (rate it)?
- Letter In person Telephone Internet

SECTION D (obstacles & barriers)

27. What do you think is the actual problem in buying a computer?
- Cost
 Space
 Electricity
 Broadband connection
 Knowledge
28. In the future, in free scheme provided by the government, which one you prefer.
- TV Mobile Computer Radio Others
29. Do women need computer knowledge?
- Yes No
30. Do women need computer training?
- Yes No
31. If you are given training in starting a computer kiosk will you be interested?
- Yes No
32. Do you need computer in your village?
- Yes No

33. What are the supports required by you? (Rate them)

Technical Marketing
Resources Financial
Insurances

34. How do you think government should support you in establishing kiosk?

35. What are the initial needs from your side in establishing kiosk?

36. What ways a kiosk will be helping your village?

Information on health
Information on government services
Information on agriculture
Information on current events
Information on market prices
Other information

37. Do you face any problem with telecommunication facility?

Yes No

38. Do you prefer the internet to be accessed in your Regional language?

Yes No

Thank you

FEEDBACK 1

1. ngah 18-25 25-35 35-45
 2. Kfthp
 3. taJ
 4. gbgG : +2/B.A./B.Sc NtW fytij j Fji
 5. f z pdi (fkga+l lh) , aff njhAk? njhAk njhahJ xusTfFj njhAk
 6. VjhtJ rWnjhoy nraJ nfh z L , Uffwhfsh? Mk , yiy , gNghJ nraatly iy
 7. i lggiq njhAk? Mk , yiy
 8. f z pdi gwwi gawri ng z fS fF mtrjak jhdh? Mk , yiy
 9. cqfs Chh f z pdi i kak , Uffwjh? Mk , yiy
 10. cqfs fuhkjijy kUj Jt trji Nghjia msT cssjh? Mk , yiy
 11. f z pdi fytj cqfs Chy css gssi\$ lqfsiy cssjh? Mk , yiy
 12. , ej f z pdi gawri ia gwwia cqfs vjhghhgGf is ny thfsiy vOj Tk
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FEEDBACK 2

1. ngah
Mk , y i y
2. f z |d| gawr|ajy fwwj i d i t j J xU i kak cqfshy njh|qfKbAkh?
Mk , y i y
3. f z |d| gawr|ajy eqfs kwrthfS ff nrhyy| nfhLff KbAkh?
Mk , y i y
4. f z |d| xU Mr|hah nrhyy|j UtJ Rykhf c ssjh?
Mk , y i y
5. f z |d|Ald \$ba f z |d| gawr| r|bfffsp|y t|sffk vggb c ssJ?
Ghp|wJ mJ k|Lk gawr|ff NghJk
k|fTk Ghp|wJ
6. f z |d| cqfs CufF Nj i tah?
Mk , y i y
7. f z |d| tU i fajy Nt i yff M|fs vLggJ F i weJ t|Lkh?
Mk , y i y
8. f z |d| mtr|aj i j gawr|adhy gaDssJ vdW njh|eJ nfh z Nl d?
Mk , y i y
9. cqfshy f z |d| gawr| i kak Mukg|jj hy yhgjNjhL e|jj KbAkh?
Mk , y i y
10. cyfjj|i d gww| t|tuqf i s mw|a Nj i t?
thndhy| njh i yffh|r| f z |d|

11. ng z fS fF , ej gaƿrþaðhy gad VwgL fƿjh?

Mk , y i y

12. , ej gaƿrþ gƿwþ cqfs fUj J
