A study on availability,accessibility and problems associated with use of ICTs among rural women of Assam

Abstract

AStudy was done to analyse theavailability as well as accessibility and problems associated with use of ICTs among rural women from the state of Assam and similarly Jorhat and Nagaon districts of Assam,India was selected for the present study including a total number of 400 respondents who were selected as considering the Simple Random sampling method. The findings revealed that majority of the farmers are having mobile phones as well as television and radio. Further ranking method was used to identify the problems faced by the respondent with use of ICTs. Among the various problems faced by the respondents while using the ICTs, "Lack of confidence while using ICTs" has been given ranked I (0.96), followed by "High cost of ICT Services", assigned ranked II (0.91) and "Irregularity in power supply", was ranked III (0.89). To provide benefits to the women farmers by using the ICTs and to reduce the gender imbalances from the society rural women's access towards ICTs and the constraints associatedwhile use of ICT by the ruralneed to be studied. Hence the present study has been undertaken to address some of these areas. Thus as a whole the main purpose of this study examines the extent of rural women's availability,accessibility andconstraints associated while use of ICTs by rural women.

Key words: Rural women, ICTs.

Introduction

In today's world basic education is very much necessary for an individual especially for the rural women who are residing in the villages so that they can utilize their knowledge they have acquired through education which will further increases their capacity and capability to access and apply information in their day to day life. Such ability and capability will increase

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Comment [BP4]: Your findings should be presented after stating the methodology use for the study.

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1.Motivation of the study or objective of the study
2. Methods/ methodology deployed to achieve the objectives
3. Major findings of the study
4. Recommendations based on findings of the study.

The above elements should form the basis of your abstract

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transferring the informationsamong themselves and also globally. Availability and ability to access different Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) is very much necessarynot only for the rural women but also for the progress of the society as a whole. Some ofthe ICTs such as computers, internet, CD/DVDs, radio, television, Computer Based Instruction, e-learning, etc, have been found to be very effective and useful for learners in solution of tasks. Information and communication technologies (ICT) comprise a complex and heterogeneous set of goods, applications and services used to produce, distribute process and transform information. The ICT sector consists of segments as diverse as telecommunications, television and radio broadcasting, computer hardware and software, computer services and electronic media (e.g., the internet, electronic mail, electronic commerce, and computer games) as well as the content of these media (Suresh, 2011).Raorane and Kulkarni (2014) in their study 'Agricultural Development in India in view of Information Technology', mentioned that insufficient power availability in rural areas, poor ICT infrastructure, ICT illiteracy of people, non availability of timely relevant content, non-integration of services, poor advisory services and lack of localization, and in particular non availability of agricultural information kiosks/knowledge centers at the grass root level restricts the Government's objective of covering more people regularly in the country.

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2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Location of study

The study was carried out in the state of Assam. Simple random sampling was selected for selection of districts, blocks, villages and respondents. Jorhat and Nagaon districts were selected randomly from the state of Assam. From the selected districts four (4) blocks were selected following simple random sampling method, out of the four blocks two (2) villages were selected randomly. Thus altogether eight (8) villages were selected.

2.2 Selection of Respondents

A list of villages was prepared with the help of village leaders. Then fifty (50) respondents were selected from each village, thus altogether 200 respondents were selected from each district. Thus a total of 400 rural women were finally selected for data collection of the study.

2.3 Data collection:

Primary data on availability and accessibility to different ICTs and problems associated with use of ICTs among rural women were collected from the respondents through well-structured and pretested schedule. Theinformation generated by PRA and group discussion complemented the questionnairebased information collected through personal interview. The data were collected in between June 2019 to January 2020.

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3. Results and discussions:

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3.1Availability and accessibility to different ICTs

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Table 1. shows the availability and accessibility to different ICTs, and found a disparity in availability of ICT tools like television (86.25%), internet (28.00%), radio (17.00%), CD/DVD (5.50%) and computer (2.75%), while mobile phone was present among 92.50 per cent of the respondents. The findings indicate that there is an increased diffusion of mobile phone and television among the respondents and therefore appropriate use of mobile phone can provide large scope for development among the respondents. Further none of the respondents had reported availability of Common Service Centres in the present study.

On the other hand data in the same table shows accessibility to different ICTs and found that majority of respondents (88.50%) had regular access of mobile phone, television (80.75%) followed by internet (28.00%) and radio (11.25%). Further table also indicates that no access

has been reported in case of computer and CD/DVD. The reason for high access in mobile phone and television by the respondents is because of high availability. As for mobile phones they are portable, affordable and come with many adaptable tools and features attractive to the rural women and aids in instant communication. Furthertelevisionare considered as very useful medium for communication, as they are used throughout the day but for short period of time in each instance.

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Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to availability and accessibilityto different ICTs

N=400

ICT tools	Availability				Extent of access					
	Yes		No		Regularly		Occasionally		Never	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Computer	11	2.75	389	97.25	0	0.00	0	0.00	400	100.00
Television	345	86.25	55	13.75	323	80.75	22	5.50	55	13.75
Radio	68	17.00	332	83.00	45	11.25	23	5.75	332	83.00
Mobile phone	370	92.50	30	7.50	354	88.50	16	4.00	30	7.50
CD/DVD	22	5.50	378	94.50	0	0.00	0	0.00	400	100.00
Internet	112	28.00	288	72.00	112	28.00	0	0.00	288	72.00

3.2 Constraints associated while use of ICTs

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The data in Table 2 shows the constraints associated with use of ICTs by the respondents. For the analysis ranking method was used to discover the constraints faced by the respondent while using the ICTs. Ranks were assigned to each constraints by taking out the mean score

obtained by the respondent towardseach constraints, the assigned ranks were presented in Table 2.Froma range ofconstraints faced by the respondents in utilization of ICTs, "Lack of confidence while using ICTs" has been given rank I (0.96), followed by "High cost of ICT Services", ranked II (0.91) and "Irregularity in powersupply", was ranked III (0.89), followed by Lack of knowledge on operating ICTs ranked IV (0.83) and Poor network connectivity ranked V (0.73) . Similar constraints in utilization of ICTs were also reported by Syiem and Raj (2015), Hassan *et al.*(2008) and Agwu *et al.* (2008).

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Table 2. Ranking of constraints associated while use of ICTs by the respondents

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N=400

Sl. No.	Problems	Mean score	Rank
1.	High cost related to ICT services	0.91	II
2.	Poor network connectivity	0.73	V
3.	Lack of confidence while using ICTs	0.96	I
4.	Irregularity in power supply	0.89	III
5.	Lack of knowledge on operating ICTs	0.83	IV
6.	Lack of repairing centres in the area	0.68	VIII
7.	High cost for repairing ICTs	0.70	VII
8.	Language problem	0.71	VI
9.	Distanced ICT services from home	0.67	IX

Conclusion

Based on the findings it was found that majority of rural women were having mobile phone (92.50%) and Television (86.25%). Most of respondent had faced various problems associated with use of ICTs such as "Lack of confidence in operating ICTs", "High cost of ICT Services", and "Erratic power supply". Though agriculture is the primary source of

income for more than fifty per cent of people in India, it is immobile in many aspects and which is characterizedby deprived connectivity, deferred and untrustworthy information among the farmers. Other reasons includelow land holding marginal and not showing a positive attitude towards the adoption of improved technology and so on. Hence we can say that now a day's ICTs hasbecoming the most influential means for disseminating information regarding region andcrop specific to the farmers globally.

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