# ROLE OF ICT IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

**Prof. Ahilya P. Patil**

Assistant professor,

Department of BCA

SNDT Women's University,

Mumbai

**Abstract:** The first Prime Minister of India Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru once said, "To awaken the people, it is women who must be awaken; once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves and the nation moves". In developing countries women are abused or misused in various sectors. Submissiveness or compliance and servility is in their nature because of the inequality they are facing. Despite the great growth of education in many countries women are still not considered as equal gender everywhere. The status of women is considered to be minor or inferior even after her great contribution to society. It is the right time for women to stand for her. Women empowerment is a burning issue. Various NGOs are working for the betterment of women and give them training for self-independence. Government is also taking this issue seriously and has announced various policies in favour of women. In this scenario Information and Communication Technology is also playing an important role. Through ICT women are getting security, awareness, knowledge, employments, confidence, popularity etc.  This paper brings into notice the role of Information and Communication Technology in women empowerment. Here various cases have been discussed to give a light on the different angles of ICT has brought to the society. Due to the ICT  new generation women across the world have overcome all negative notions and have proved themselves beyond doubt in all spheres of life including the most intricate and cumbersome world of entrepreneurship. In this respect making use of ICT might just become a magic wand to improvise the conditions of women in the present times.

**Keywords:** ICT, gender equality, women empowerment, Technology.

**Introduction:**

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Women Empowerment refers to increasing and improving the social, economic, political and legal strength of the women, to ensure equal-right to women. Women empowerment helps women to control and benefit from resources, assets, income and their own time, as well as the ability to manage risk and improve their economic status and wellbeing. When women get empowered, the whole family gets benefits

from it. There has been progress over the last decades: More girls are going to school, fewer girls are forced into early marriage, more women are serving in parliament and positions of leadership, and laws are being reformed to advance gender equality. Still, many women in India and different parts of the world are missing opportunities in various employment sectors, and many segregate them because they are women.[1][2]

**Need of Women Empowerment:** All through history, gender disparity was a part of an approved men commanded society. The traditional attitudes of India expect that the role of women is mainly focused to the household activities like upbringing of the children and kitchen work.Swami Vivekananda said, "There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the situation of women is improved."

In India, as elsewhere in the developing world, women play a central role in family, communityand social development. However, women often remain  invisible and   unheard. Women  morethan men have to balance the complexities of surviving in extreme poverty, yet these women areexcluded from discussion because they are  often illiterate, they lack confidence and they lackmobility.Empower is a multidimensional word including social, physical, spiritual, mental, political andpsychological   dimensions.   Empower means personal growth   in   decision making,   analyzingcritical situations, coping with all circumstances and facing challengesIn India, as elsewhere in the developing world, women play a central role in family, communityand social development. However, women often remain  invisible and   unheard. Women morethan men have to balance the complexities of surviving in extreme poverty, yet these women areexcluded from discussion because they are often illiterate, they lack  confidence and they lackmobility.Empower is a multidimensional word including social, physical, spiritual, mental, political andpsychological   dimensions. Empower   means personal growth   in   decision making,  analyzing critical situations, coping with all circumstances and facing challenges

However, women  often remain  invisible and   unheard. Women  morethan men have to balance the complexities of surviving in extreme poverty, yet these women areexcluded from discussion because they are   often illiterate, they lack   confidence and they lackmobilityIn India, as elsewhere in the developing world, women play a central role in family, communityand social development. However, women  often remain  invisible and   unheard. Women morethan men have to balance the complexities of surviving in extreme poverty, yet these women areexcluded from discussion because they are  often illiterate, they lack  confidence and they lackmobility

Empower is a multidimensional word including social, physical, spiritual, mental, political and psychological dimensions. Empower means personal growth in decision making, analyzing critical situations, coping with all circumstances and facing challenges which will help to improve health and wealth of nation.With respect to the impact of the pandemic on education, an estimated 27 crore children in India have been affected as a result of school closure. This is worrisome since, in addition to learning, government schools provide mid-day meals to children, which is an essential factor for vulnerable children and girls to attend school.

Likewise, with the shift in classes to the digital mode, it will particularly be more difficult for girls to access education mainly because of increased expectations to contribute to household chores. Access to education is also impacted because of poor access to technology, wherein only an estimated 28% women have access in rural India, while in the urban areas, access is estimated to be 33%.Out of the total allocation towards education in 2020-'21, a mere 0.4% was allocated to women as per the Gender Budget Statement, which is less than sufficient to meet the growing challenges of access to education in light of the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic is not just a health issue. It is a profound shock to our societies and economies, and women are at the heart of care and response efforts underway.As front-line responders, health professionals, community volunteers, transport and logistics managers, scientists and more, women are making critical contributions to address the outbreak every day.The majority of caregivers, at home and in our communities, are also women.Additionally, they are at increased risk of infection and loss of livelihood, and existing trends point to less access to sexual and reproductive health and rise in domestic violence during crisis.

As the COVID-19 pandemic deepens economic and social stress coupled with restricted movement and social isolation measures, gender-based violence is increasing exponentially. Many women are being forced to 'lockdown' at home with their abusers at the same time that services to support survivors are being disrupted or made inaccessible.

**Role of ICT in Women Empowerment:**

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) is a broader term for Information Technology (IT), which refers to all communication technologies, including the internet, wireless networks, cell phones, computers, software, middleware, video-conferencing, social networking, and other media applications and services enabling users to

access, retrieve, store, transmit, and manipulate information in a digital form.ICTs are also used to refer to the convergence of media technology such as audio-visual and telephone networks with computer networks, by means of a unified system of cabling (including signal distribution and management) or link system. However, there is no universally accepted definition of ICTs considering that the concepts, methods and tools involved in ICTs are steadily evolving on an almost daily basis.

ICT is playing an important role in changing the attitude and perspective of society towards women. It is creating a psychological comfort level of women at their work place by providing them additional knowledge and skills. Psychological empowerment can be at organizational level, personal level or social level. Through Internet, television, radio and mobile phones women are getting information about all the real incidents happing in world and learning skills to tackle situations; it is helping to bring leadership qualities in them.[6]

ICT has provided new term E- governance; all the developing countries are working on this. It can get greater access to services, greater accountability, transparency and citizen empowerment, strategic reward such as improved decision making through information, improved knowledge sharing and organizational learning, improved interactions with citizens, other government organizations and businesses and industry, improve market relationships between government and private sectors and greater ability for organizational change management. [7]

Following are some aspects of life which have a direct influence of ICT especially on women:

**(i) Women's increased access to job Market and improve entrepreneurship using ICT**

- In most countries, women comprise a significant percentage of the labour-force and, in some, account for more than the world average of 51 %.
- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has found that the use of information and communications technology (ICT) has led not only to better business performance for women but also better living conditions. It can also be particularly effective in loosening constraints on women entrepreneurs.

**(ii) Increase of average household income in villages**

Rural women's access to paid work is crucial to achieving self-reliance and the well-being of dependent family members using ICT

**(iii) Women empowerment**

    **a) Personal empowerment**

- Obtaining the knowledge and information they wanted.
- Feeling comfortable participating in certain group activities or able to talk about certain   social or personal topics.

### b) Educational empowerment

- ICT deliver information about whole world in a language they understand and a medium that they would be comfortable with.
- Wide knowledge of each area, understanding of new concepts
- ICT help in non formal and adult women education.

### c) Economic empowerment

- ICT helps them to increase their monthly income.
- ICT provide jobs and opportunities to merge with large industries.
- ICT education makes women economically sound that is source of other all types of women empowerment.

### d) Social empowerment

- Gaining access to new and useful knowledge, information and awareness about a range of issues, topics and activities of interest to women. This new information and knowledge often provided mental stimulation and broadened participants' thinking.
- Participating in various activities with other women and people in positions of influence where you can openly discuss issues, share concerns and experiences, and reflect on issues affecting you

### e) Psychological empowerment

- An increase in self-confidence and self esteem.
- Feeling more valued, respected.
- Greater motivation, inspiration, enthusiasm and interest to develop new skills and knowledge.
- Feeling much less isolated from others (particularly other supportive women) and, as a result, experiencing greater wellbeing, happiness and enjoyment of life.

### f) Technological empowerment

- New knowledge, awareness and understanding about new ICTs and their potential benefits and impacts.
- The development of new skills, experience and greater confidence and competence in using new communication technologies.

• Advice and support in using email and the Internet, provided in ways that often met the participants' needs very well.

**g) Political empowerment**

• Having a voice for their rights.

• Feel decision making capacity.

• Networking or meeting with people in government and industry and other women to discuss issues affecting

## (iv) Shrinking Information Asymmetry through ICT.

- Information asymmetry is a problem that prevents communication processes to be effective in the digital economy

- Information and communication technology (ICT) has been recently documented to increase information sharing between market participants in various sectors of developing countries.[8]

## (v) Improved Governance

- The essence of e-government is to link government activities with the advanced technology that the world is having today. This technology has already shown a remarkable job in bringing efficiency in private sector through e-business, e-banking, e-procurement etc. E-government is engaged not only in providing citizen services but in improving public sector efficiency, transparency and accountability in government functions and decreasing the costs of public administration

## (vi) Indigenous Knowledge

- Indigenous knowledge is the basis for many remote, rural, and marginalized communities in society and as such, is an important component in the educational development of members within these communities.

- In parallel with the increasing recognition of the value and relevance of Indigenous knowledge to today's world and the need to preserve it, is recognition of the role that information technologies (IT) can play in its capture, management and dissemination.[9]

## (vii) Easy-Family communication

- There is no doubt about it-the way we communicate with our family members today has changed dramatically in recent years. Just a decade ago, text messaging, blogging, and emails were not methods of family

communication. Today, they are widely used by families around the world. For example, parents use text messages to remind children of their curfews.

- Children send emails to their parents to give them their Christmas lists. College students use Web cameras to say good night to their family member who live hundreds of miles away. These are just a few of the many ways in which technology has changed the way families communicate with one another in today's modern world.[10]

**(viii) Increase Social awareness**

- In this digital Era, social networking has already become a social norm for many of the new generation teenagers. Updating Facebook status, tweeting and posting photographs on Instagram have become everyday activities. Their life is reflected in social networking where there lies a lot of memories by posting images of their happy moments and recording some other emotionally important happenings and events.[11]

**Safety AppsThat Empower Women**

Technology has proven to play a vital role when it comes to security. Many companies have built innovative solutions to improve women safety. There are apps, wearable devices, GPS trackers and many more. Here is the list of five best safety tech tools for women.

**My SafetiPin**

This is the highest-rated app designed to keep women safe. SafetiPin offers functions like tracking GPS location, calling emergency contact number. The app also shares details like nearby safety location where the user can go in case of an emergency. The pinned locations are marked with safety scores.

**bSafe**

This app creates a social safety network of those who will get a notification in case of an emergency situation. It also provides an alarm which sends the exact location and audio-visuals of the surrounding areas. It is possible to set a timer that automatically sends an alarm to friends if the user fails to return in time to turn off the alarm.

**Letstrack**

This app can act as a vehicle security system along with an app. Users can install their smartphone installed with this app in their vehicles. The app offers features like connectivity in rural areas, real-time tracking, zone alerts, and 24-hour history.

**Rescuer**

This women safety app lets users send unlimited messages to the users who have the app on their phone. You can set the contact information of two people so that they can reach the respective spot to rescue the person in trouble. If the user is in danger, they simply have to press the emergency tab in the app.

**CitizenCop**

This app is ideal to immediately report a crime at the earliest. If a woman is stuck in an emergency, she immediately reports the incident. The app is designed keeping the focus on the well-being of the people. The app acts as a bridge between law enforcement department and citizens.[14]

**Conclusions:** In the recent years, through the implementation of various ICT related projects, the Women Empowerment is been improved . There are also many projects for the greater involvement of women. The main object is to make the women both economically and socially strong.The study clearly found that the women were immensely benefited from the use of ICT. ICT has made a tremendous impact in imparting knowledge on modern technology and its uses. This study concluded that the ICT (information and communication technology) empower a woman in various areas like social, educational, psychological, political, technological and economical and well as few degree of disempowerment due to some internal and external reasons.The majority of women in the developing world do not have access to ICTs due to variety of barriers as such the infrastructural, social, cultural and linguistic. Still , majority of women in the developing world do not have access to ICTs due to variety of barriers as such the poverty, computer literacy,  infrastructural, social, cultural and linguistic etc. So we should focus on how to cross  such barriers which help women empowerment more better.

**References:**

[1] Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls(2020),Sustainable development goals Retrieved from,
https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/

[2]WOMEN EMPOWERMENT(2021) Times of India retrieved from
https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Women-Empowerment

[3]Mansi N. Zaveri1 ,Nisarg P. Shah2 , WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN 21ST CENTURY: WHY AND HOW? , International Journal of All Research Education & Scientific Methods, ISSN : 2394-1766

[4] In the 2021 Budget, India needs to do more to address the challenges faced by women(2021) ,Women Empowerment, Retrieved from In the 2021 Budget, India needs

to do more to address the challenges faced by women
https://scroll.in/article/984635/in-the-2021-budget-india-needs-to-do-more-to-address-the-challenges-faced-by-women


[5] In Focus: Gender equality matters in COVID-19 response,( March , 2020), un women, Retrieved from https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response

[6] SaritaRathi," Role of ICT in Women Empowerment" in Advances in Economics and Business Management "(AEBM), ISSN: 2394-1545; Online ISSN: 2394-1553; Volume 2, Number 5; April-June, 2015 pp. 519-521 © KrishiSanskriti Publications

[7] Avram and I. Priescu, "Access to information and empowerment perspectives in health services," Social and behavioralsciences,vol. 33, pp. 949–953, 2012.

[8] Miranda Kajtazi, Information asymmetry in the digital economy, July 2010 DOI: 10.1109/i-Society16502.2010.6018811,SourceIEEE Xplore

[9] Jane Hunter, The Role of Information Technologies in Indigenous Knowledge Management, Australian Academic & Research Libraries, ISSN: 0004-8623 (Print) 1839-471X (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/uarl20

[10] The Impact Of Technology On Family Communication Media Essay, 1st Jan 2015 in Media, UKEssays, Retrieved from https://www.ukessays.com/essays/media/the-impact-of-technology-on-family-communication-media-essay.php

[11] AyatAymanAbdel-Aziz,The role of ICTs in creating the new social public place of the digital era, Alexandria Engineering Journal, **Volume 55, Issue 1, March 2016, Pages 487-493**

[12] Dr. BhawnaSinha, ICT-A Tool for Women Empowerment, January 2019, Conference: Women Empowerment Re-visioning Identities and Building Strategies for a Participatory Society, At: Patna, Bihar