

Women Empowerment Through Technological Initiatives - Challenges of Women Digital Inclusion Strategies

*¹Jagadeesh.Naduvanamath

Assistant Professor Department of Political Science Government First Grade College
Magadi,

Abstract: This paper examines the need for promotion women empowerment strategies through technology and focuses on the broader opportunities opening for women through technology. India is ranked in the global player of the 21st century. It is advancing economically and technologically. India is still a patriarchal society with males monopolizing the technological advancements. The access, mastering and controlling of technology has hither to been a male dominated it has very slowly reached women. Several technological advancements have relentlessly influenced women negatively. Many of them have displaced women through mechanization process has displaced women in labor market in a larger number rather than men. Instead of technological advances supporting women and relieving them from drudgery, poverty and unemployment, they have added further to their miseries. They have hit her negatively and her roots of sustainable future are almost dimmed. Several studies and feminist researches on this topic have shown that technologically supportive and all inclusive policies for women have borne authentic results. Hence there is a need to focus on technology driven schemes for women. Promotion of a liaison with various women focus agencies, NGOs, Self help groups, welfare nodal centers is very essential to make the initiatives a success. It is necessary to make women own technical tools first and learn to operate them effectively with this various stakeholders.

Keywords: Women empowerment, digital inclusion, technological initiatives, challenges

I. Introduction

The rural Indian population constitutes 68.84% of the overall population as per 2011 census. The rural people are deprived of basic amenities extensively. The total female population in India is 496.5 million and out of that nearly 360.95 million Indian women live in rural areas. As per 2011 census, 41.25% of women are illiterates and lack basic educational requirement. Those with lower literacy are engaged in very low waged occupations. The bulk of rural women spend longer hours in household chores, in farm or agriculture allied activities including cattle rearing, agricultural labor, dairying, poultry farming etc.. According to Gender Inequality Index of 2010 maternal mortality ratio (MMR) is 450 for every 1000 newborn, adolescent fertility rate is 68.1, while population with at least secondary education above the age of 25 years and older is 26.6% (male 50.4%),

1.1 The labor force statistics

The labor force participation rate is 35.7% while it is 84.5% in males, but their engagement in technologically advances work force is very less. According to UN (2005), technological tools can be a powerful catalyst for the political and social women empowerment and the promotion of gender equality. There had been a lot of ventures at the grass root level by various governmental and nongovernmental organizations (Duncombe, 2005).

1.2 Problems of rural women - Rural women suffer from

1. Caste based discrimination
2. Social segregation
3. Religious based unfairness
4. Unequal treatment
5. family violence
6. domestic suffering
7. patriarchal intolerance
8. unawareness about current developmental schemes
9. poor access to education
10. Poor access to health care
11. poor access to economic resources

12. Environmental influences such as famine s, floods ,rain, drought etc

1.2 Constraints for women towards technological inclusion- there are several constraints for women towards evolving technological inclusion strategies.

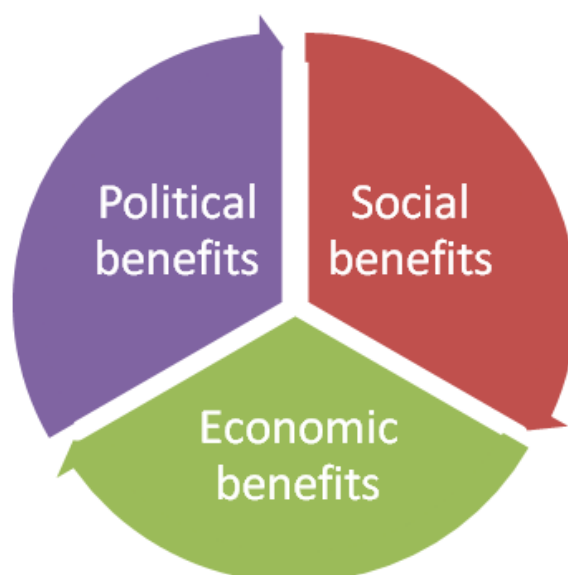
1. Functional Constraints which includes bringing technology to the doorsteps of rural women
2. Technological Constraints - creating technological infrastructure to train rural women
3. Economic Constraints - involving financial allocation and funding to technological initiatives
4. Social Constraints - creating societal awareness about technological inclusion strategies.

These constraints have always have impeded the women empowerment process, The basic shortage in accessing infrastructure support vehemently impedes their inclusion.

1.3 Methods of technological support for rural women - Rural women can be supported towards sustainability though a number of technological initiatives.

1. Community radio
2. Community e-calendar
3. Community e-group
4. Establishing community knowledge center
5. Establishing village knowledge center
6. Messaging
7. Mobile sets
8. Phone
9. Tele-conference
10. Television
11. Tele calling
12. Using computers / laptops / tabs /
13. Using smart phones
14. Using digital basic tools
15. Using digital cameras
16. Using internet for banking / education / health care access
17. Video uploading
18. Voice mails

1.3 Benefits from technological initiatives- The inclusion of women in technological advances have several benefits which include social , economic , and political benefits.



1.4 Economic Benefits

Socially women who are undergoing disproportionate discrimination will benefit from inclusive policies and technological initiatives. They can come out of the shackles of slavery and patriarchal hegemony. Rural women suffer from caste based discrimination which hamper their living and they become easy targets of repeated disparity and inequality. Rural women become target of unfairness and discriminative attitude from

the community and suffer from lack of livelihood means. If policies of inclusion through technological initiatives can focus them and bring them to mainstream of society they too will gain access to basic education, health care, sustainable employment, inclusive banking, micro credit, etc. These initiatives will support her towards a better future and sustainability.

1.5 Social Benefits

Women empowerment through inclusive policies help the society to re-focus on women issues and review problems of women in a broader direction. The economic inclusion initiatives through banking prove beneficial to women to gain access to economic resources and support themselves economically. Women empowerment through inclusive banking can become a reality. Women's self help groups can become affiliated to small savings, bank transactions, micro loans, crop loans, educational loans etc. This will help them to understand the economic welfare schemes of the banks. Women become acquainted with government institutions and their welfare schemes. They will learn to interact with government agencies and understand the approaches of the government towards their progress and uplift. Women become acquainted with micro finance and micro enterprises. They come to know about regular repayment of bank loans, bank interest rate fluctuations, bank savings, bank policies and welfare schemes. They will gain confidence of the financial institutions to support in their micro entrepreneurial ventures.

1.6 Role of Stakeholders

The role of different stakeholders in empowering women have been very positive. The stakeholders need to contribute towards bringing women inside the purview of technological advances. All self help groups, voluntary organizations, government officialdom and international corporate sectors. Stakeholder need to work out about creating awareness for women through trainings and orientations. All stakeholders need to play a key role in promotion of equality, fairness and compassionate attitude towards women and their problems towards gaining a sustainable future. Rural women's problems differ from urban women and rural women support systems needs to be different and strong towards maintaining her dignity and self esteem.

II. Conclusion

Thus there is a need to identify factors contributing to rural women empowerment in the technological sector with initiative focusing women. There is a need for delineating the role of stakeholders in implementation process of all types of technological initiatives. Focusing on the constraints faced by rural women in the process of technological deployment is necessary to identify the issues hampering their inclusion. The constraints of functional, technological economic and social constraints have to be attended in the women empowerment process. The support of stakeholders in this process will be highly supportive hence there is a need to include all stakeholders as representatives in the policy framing process. Promotion of a liaison with various agencies, NGOs, Self help groups' welfare nodal centers is very essential to make the initiatives a success. It is necessary to make women own technical tools first and learn to operate them effectively with this various stakeholders. Women issues need to be looked at in the light of national tradition and to be designed towards nation's overall progress.

References

- [1]. Ali, Azra Asghar (2000). *The Emergence of Feminism among Indian Muslim Women 1920-1947*. Oxford University Press.
- [2]. Altekhar, Anant Sadashiv (1956). *The position of women in Hindu civilization, from prehistoric times to the present day*. Motilal Banarsidass Publ.
- [3]. Amin, Sonia Nishat (1996). *The World of Muslim Women in Colonial Bengal, 1876-1939*. Brill.
- [4]. Madhok, Sujata. "Women: Background & Perspective". InfoChange India. Archived from the original on 24 July 2008. Retrieved 24 December 2006.
- [5]. Mishra, R. C. (2006). *Women in India: towards gender equality*. New Delhi: Authorspress.
- [6]. National Resource Center for Women. Archived fromon 19 June 2009. Retrieved 24 December 2006.
- [7]. Nubile, Clara (2003). "Indian women". In Nubile, Clara. *The danger of gender: caste, class and gender in contemporary Indian women's writing*. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons.
- [8]. Parihar, Lalita Dhar (2011). *Women and law: from impoverishment to empowerment*. Lucknow: Eastern Book Company.
- [9]. Rao, Mamta (2008). *Law relating to women and children (3rd ed.)*. Lucknow: Eastern Book ...women and the protection provided under various criminal, personal and labour laws in India
- [10]. Singh, Shweta (2009). "Examining the Dharma driven identity of women: Mahabharata's Kunti", in Swami, Indu, *The women question in the contemporary Indian women writings in English*, New Delhi: Sarup Book Publishers,
- [11]. Tryambakayajvan (1995). *Stridharmapaddhati [The perfect wife (guide to the duties of women)]*. Julia Leslie (translator). New Delhi New York: Penguin Books.