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## Use perception of ICT Tools and Web resources for Rural Employment and Business Practices among the Rural Women: A Survey

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### Abstract

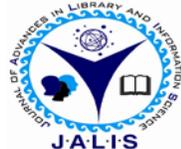
*The nation as a whole gains from increased opportunities for women's empowerment, particularly in rural and semi-rural areas. ICT has evolved into a tool for the empowerment of women, particularly those from underprivileged backgrounds. In addition to examining the use of apps and programmes for women's development and employability, this research paper will also look into how much knowledge there is available about women's entrepreneurship and employability thanks to ICT. Along with a number of other important research variables on ICT-enabled skills, women's empowerment, and these topics, the use of the IT companies' portal for employability and its awareness among rural women have been examined. This study examines some important ICT-based initiatives aimed at empowering rural and underprivileged women. Last but not least, it emphasizes social participation and awareness in addition to advancing gender equality and empowering rural and disadvantaged women.*

### Keywords

ICT: Web resources; Employability; Entrepreneurship;  
Knowledge Updation

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### Introduction

ICT stands for information, communication, and technology, and it literally means the use of technology to communicate between groups or individuals. It entails the use of ICT devices and tools. Communication and technology aid in the spread of information among the world's various groups of people. ICT refers to the use of hardware, software, and application tools to ensure the proper handling of information and communication channels. Identifying, collecting, storing, processing, disseminating, and presenting information in any suitable format, including text and multimedia, is part of the process. Computers, networks, telephones, radios, CD-ROMs, personal Digital Assistant tools and including mobile phones, digital cameras, and other devices and tools are examples of peripherals. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines information and communication technologies (ICTs) as "essentially information-handling technologies" - "a diverse group of items, applications, and services used to generate, store, practice, disseminate, and interchange information." The set includes old ICTs like radio, television, and phones, as well as new ICTs like computers, satellite and wireless technology, and the Internet. These various tools can now collaborate and combine to form our networked world. An enormous network of interconnected telephone services, standardized computing hardware, the internet, radio, and television that reaches every corner of the globe." At the moment, both traditional and modern ICTs are accessed and used to meet people's various information needs.

### Review of Literature

As like the present study, studies have highlighted the study variables of women entrepreneurship in Indonesia and Malaysia. A multidisciplinary literature review as the consequence of identification of previous studies found positive association between women entrepreneurship practice, business performance and ICT use. [Ong, S. Y. Y. & et al. (2020)]. A study on economic empowerment program of rural Uganda revealed that targeted vocational skills training, apprenticeships scheme and a start-up financial package may facilitate the rural empowerment [Bechange, S. & et al. (2021)]. Another research suggested that the Aloe vera supply chain (AVSC) be integrated in the state of Rajasthan to improve rural employment and business practices. The research created interaction among the enablers as of the current study. [Priyadarshi, R. & et al. (2019)]. In accordance with the current research, the labour demand side of

employability is also evaluated via interviews with 17 employers who indicated unique job search and other employment challenges experienced by the respondents. [Lindsay, C. & et al. (2003)]. Training and Skill Development Programmes on Women Entrepreneurs

In India, the traditional female labour force is now unskilled. Women in urban regions do not get enough work based on their abilities, while women in rural areas do not dare to create their own micro businesses because they lack the requisite information and understanding about micro units, and they seldom benefit from them. Women entrepreneurs may be encouraged to create micro businesses via training and skill development programmes sponsored by the Central and state governments, as well as the easy availability of funds. They may raise their family's level of life and find a position in the family and society. Technical, managerial, and socio political abilities may all be improved via training. They may also learn about money management. Some of the most significant effects of training and skill development programmes for women entrepreneurs include an increase in self-motivation, success, and foresight. To overcome the obstacles, improve communication, leadership, and management abilities. Youth and interested women entrepreneurs were given skills and technical training to help them establish their training-cum manufacturing ventures.

The following is a list of skills that were used to determine if the surveyed rural women respondents were aware of and had learned the skills listed. (I) Leadership and Motivational Skills assist the estimated rural women respondents in overcoming their inhibitions by improving their communication skills, connecting with people, and sharing their views and exposure openly, regardless of gender, as well as learning about global culture and civilization. (II) Knowledge Updation assists in keeping up to date on topics such as trade items, medical consultations, and career and professional abilities.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To identify the extent of ICT use and familiarization towards employability and entrepreneurship as well as identify specific areas of ICTs in the context of need for training to the rural women.
- To develop methods and strategies of imparting ICT

enabled employability skills among the respondents.

- To know the Perceptions and Skills on business practices and rural Employability like Leadership and Motivational Skills among the rural women
- To know the Rural Women Social Awareness and Participation, Knowledge Updation with use of ICT and to analyze their basic Skills on Entrepreneurial and Employability among the rural women.

### **Limitations**

The tool used for data collection is a structured questionnaire supplemented by selective interviews. The sample population for the present study was drawn from the five zones of Tamil Nadu. The sample covered under the present study included various categories such as housewives, unemployed, employed, farmer and women students were covered in the study.

### **Methodology**

Out of 2400 respondents surveyed, 1319 had furnished all the information required for analysis intended in the study. Data was collected from women respondents randomly selected from colleges and university departments which represent five regions of the state by field visits and distributing the questionnaire developed for the study. The questionnaire was pre-tested and later modified for the final schedule. Structured Questionnaire is used to collect the primary data. Five point Likert scale and three point Likert scale were included in the questionnaire to know the level of perception and extent of familiarity and use of the variables studied.

The collected data were edited, codified and entered into the MS Excel datasheet to import for the SPSS statistical software version "IBM SPSS 22.0.0". Simple frequency, percentage analysis with cross sectional tables has been made. One sample Chi-Square test has been made to test the hypotheses. The data represented through tables and graphical presentations by correlating and grouping the variables into various subheadings as to the objectives of the study.

The data on the Socio demographic variables such as age, occupation, place of domicile - rural/semi urban were used for comparative analysis on various aspects of ICTs, employability skills, information needs of women respondents as well as challenges faced by them

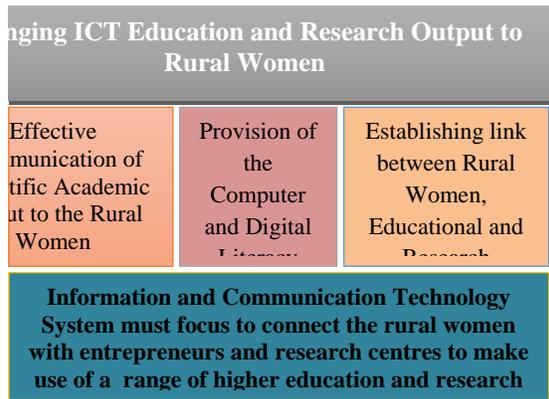


Figure 1: Bringing ICT

**Education and Research Output to Rural Women**

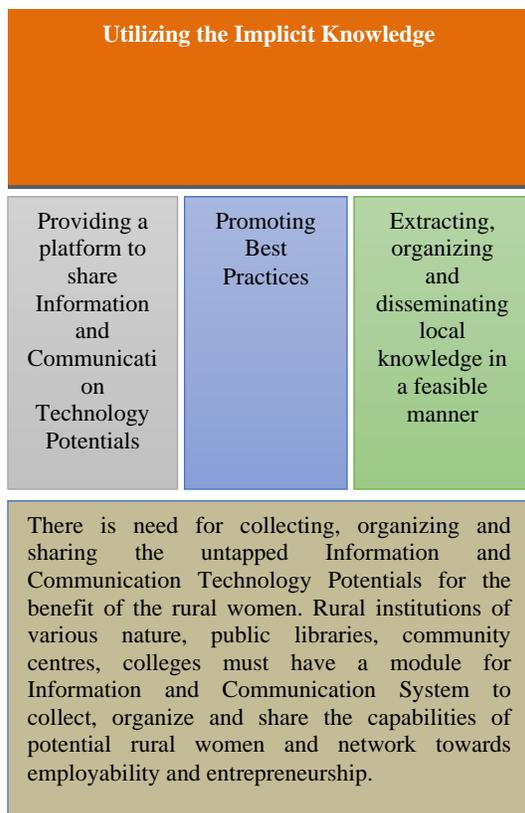


Figure 2: Utilizing the Implicit Knowledge

**I. Socio Demographic Variables by the Respondents**

**Table 1:** Distribution of Respondents as to their Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Employee	161	12.2	12.2
Farmer	11	.8	13.0
Housewife	61	4.6	17.7
Student	997	75.6	95.0
Unemployed	89	6.7	100.0
Total	1319	100.0	

Table 1 reveals the: frequency distribution of different types of occupation of the respondents. It is found that, of the total, 75.6% of the respondents were students at the time of the study followed by the employee category forming 12.2% while a meagre number of respondents were found to be unemployed with a score of 6.7%. Housewives formed 4.6% and farmers 0.8%.

**II. Distribution of respondents as to their Place of Domicile**

**Table 2:** Distribution of respondents as to their Place of Domicile

Place of Domicile	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Rural	949	71.9	71.9
Semi-Urban	370	28.1	100.0
Total	1319	100.0	

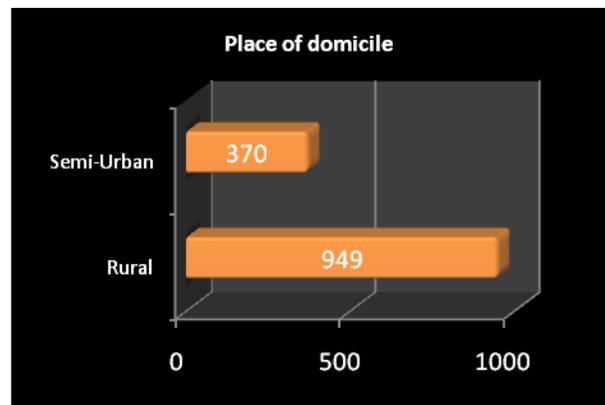


Figure 3: Place of Domicile by the Respondents

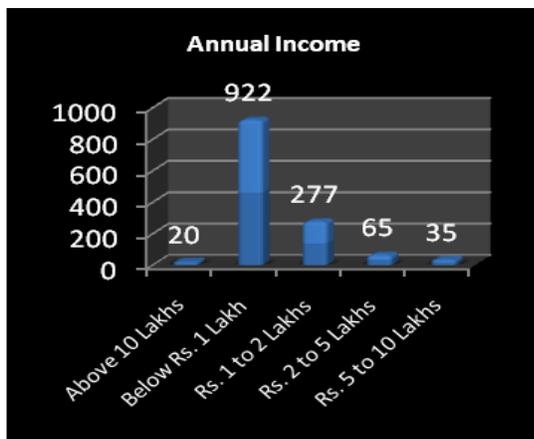
Table 2 reveals the frequency distribution of the place of domicile of the respondents. The pace of urbanization in the state of Tamil Nadu transform the areas proximate to cities as semi urban zones and the use of ICT and women empowerment also many at

times reflect on semi urban areas as of the services required to the rural women. In this context the respondents were asked to state their place of residence as rural/semi urban. Of the total respondents, 71.9% were drawn from rural areas while 28.1% from the Semi-Urban Zone.

**III. Distribution of respondents as to their Annual Income**

**Table 3:** Distribution of respondents as to their Annual Income

Annual Income	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Above 10 Lakhs	20	1.5	1.5
Below Rs. 1 Lakh	922	69.9	71.4
Rs. 1 to 2 Lakhs	277	21.0	92.4
Rs. 2 to 5 Lakhs	65	4.9	97.3
Rs. 5 to 10 Lakhs	35	2.7	100.0
Total	1319	100.0	



**Figure 4:** Annual Income by the Respondents

Table 3 reveals the frequency distribution of the annual income of the respondents. The respondents were categorized into a range of income groups. Of the total respondents, 69.9% were earning below Rs.1 Lakh annually followed by 21.0% with Rs.1-2 lakhs annually. A fair quantum of surveyed rural women were found to be in the range of Rs.2-5 Lakhs income group forming 4.9%. Ranked 4th was found to be in the range of Rs.5-10 Lakhs forming 2.7% annually. The highest annual income among the respondents was found to be Rs.10 lakhs scored by the least of all forming 1.5%.

**ICT Enabled Skills/Women Empowerment Perceptions and Skills on Entrepreneurship and Employability**

**a. Leadership and Motivational Skills**

**Table 4:** Leadership and Motivational Skills

Leadership and Motivational Skills	Count	%	
Global culture and civilization.	1	20	1.5%
	2	86	6.5%
	3	208	15.8%
	4	643	48.7%
	5	362	27.4%
CT enables to know about art of living with excellence.	1	32	2.4%
	2	61	4.6%
	3	237	18.0%
	4	608	46.1%
	5	381	28.9%
Get all the knowledge related to kitchen such as- new recipes, new useful appliances etc through ICT.	1	23	1.7%
	2	80	6.1%
	3	225	17.1%
	4	601	45.6%
	5	389	29.5%
Various programs on radio/ television, Magazines, blogs, social networking sites, webs etc related to women empowerment, create the feeling of self-development	1	25	1.9%
	2	51	3.9%
	3	191	14.5%
	4	643	48.7%
	5	409	31.0%

5. Strongly Agree 4. Agree 3. Undecided 2. Disagree 1. Strongly Disagree

A Five Point Likert Scale has been used to reveal the impact of ICT on Leadership and Motivational Skills among the rural women surveyed.

Table 4: reveals Leadership and Motivational Skills among the Respondents. The respondents who chose to strongly agree with acquiring knowledge of global culture and civilization through ICT formed 27.4% while the category that chose to agree formed 48.7%. A majority of the rural respondents forming 27.4% strongly agreed with the statement that ICT enables to know about art of living with excellence followed by 48.7% that chose to agree. It was 29.5% that chose to strongly agree with the statement that Get all the knowledge related to kitchen such as- new recipes, new useful appliances etc through ICT followed by 45.6% that chose to agree.

**b. Knowledge Updation**

**Table 5:** Knowledge Updation through ICT

Knowledge Updation through ICT		Count	%
Get information about various doctors and hospitals	1	18	1.4%
	2	50	3.8%
	3	213	16.1%
	4	666	50.5%
	5	372	28.2%
To get information about any new place	1	31	2.4%
	2	74	5.6%
	3	225	17.1%
	4	622	47.2%
	5	367	27.8%

5. Strongly Agree 4. Agree 3. Undecided 2. Disagree 1. Strongly Disagree

It is found from the table 5 that a majority (81.8%) of the respondents has enabled to access product information, While 78.7% of Agreed respondents stated that they could get right information about doctors and hospitals. They could also availed internet to know about new place to visit and travel. It is also inferred that 20% -25% of the surveyed respondents were undecided and disagree that ICT enabled them to update knowledge, since they were not familiar with the use of Internet and ICT.

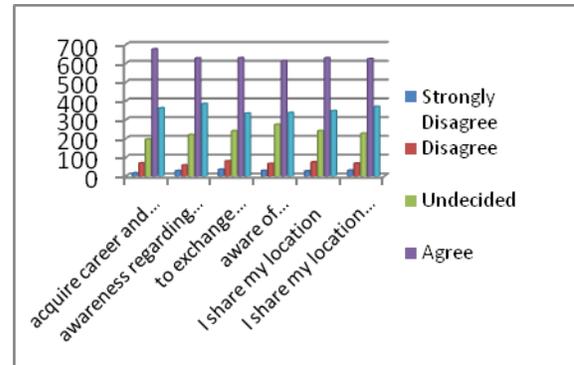
**c. Social Awareness and Participation**

**Table 6:** Social Awareness and Participation

Social Awareness and Participation		Count	%
Enable to acquire career and Professional Skills	1	16	1.2%
	2	69	5.2%
	3	196	14.9%
	4	676	51.3%
	5	362	27.4%
ICT make aware of social activities/events	1	29	2.2%
	2	66	5.0%
	3	274	20.8%
	4	613	46.5%
	5	337	25.5%
share location to well wishers when have the impression of	1	27	2.0%
	2	75	5.7%
	3	241	18.3%
	4	629	47.7%

having some trouble	5	347	26.3%
share location	1	30	2.3%
time to time with family or friends	2	68	5.2%
whenever go out of house	3	227	17.2%
	4	624	47.3%
	5	370	28.1%

5. Strongly Agree 4. Agree 3. Undecided 2. Disagree 1. Strongly Disagree



**Figure 5:** Social Awareness and Participation

It is imperative for any society and education system to develop and ensure the participation of women and seeking and valuing their perception in social and community activities, understanding and making aware of social and professional issues suddenly enhance the possibility of entrepreneurship among the rural women. In this regard, the present research aimed at assessing the level of Social Awareness and Participation. It is also found from the study that they strongly agree (27.4%) and agree (51.3%) that they acquire Career and Professional skills through ICT., ICT make aware of activities/events, (72%) in society, to share the location to the well-wishers when they were having trouble and share the location time to time with family and friends when they are out. And more than 45% of the rural women agreed all the above statements.

**d. Entrepreneurial and Employability Skills**

**e.**

**Table7:** Business Practicing and Rural Employability Skills

Entrepreneurial and Employability Skills	Count	%	
Information about various taxes	1	20	1.5%
	2	79	6.0%
	3	242	18.3%
	4	661	50.1%
	5	317	24.0%
Help to get	1	76	5.8%

Knowledge about national and international markets	2	51	3.9%
	3	215	16.3%
	4	682	51.7%
Gets information regarding money order and courier services	5	295	22.4%
	1	23	1.7%
	2	70	5.3%
	3	232	17.6%
Gets information regarding the payment of income tax	4	685	51.9%
	5	309	23.4%
	1	32	2.4%
	2	63	4.8%
	3	271	20.5%
Buy or selling any property	4	642	48.7%
	5	311	23.6%
	1	26	2.0%
	2	73	5.5%
	3	295	22.4%
Find the market price of any property or product	4	604	45.8%
	5	321	24.3%
	1	20	1.5%
	2	61	4.6%
	3	255	19.3%
Information on various skills and recourses to earn money	4	654	49.6%
	5	329	24.9%
	1	17	1.3%
	2	76	5.8%
	3	252	19.1%
Knowhow to establish a new company/ business	4	643	48.7%
	5	331	25.1%
	1	33	2.5%
	2	73	5.5%
	3	301	22.8%
Help in Business, advertisement and to show expertise	4	592	44.9%
	5	320	24.3%
	1	19	1.4%
	2	64	4.9%
	3	296	22.4%
Know insurance plans	4	610	46.2%
	5	330	25.0%
	1	31	2.4%
	2	68	5.2%
	3	289	21.9%
Get updated about government schemes for social welfare	4	616	46.7%
	5	315	23.9%
	1	25	1.9%
	2	75	5.7%
	3	252	19.1%
Get information about women's	4	637	48.3%
	5	330	25.0%
	1	34	2.6%
	2	80	6.1%
	3	263	19.9%

reservation in various fields through ICT	4	617	46.8%
	5	325	24.6%
To develop problem solving skills	1	40	3.0%
	2	58	4.4%
	3	223	16.9%
	4	622	47.2%
Provide a platform for career advancement	5	376	28.5%
	1	29	2.2%
	2	65	4.9%
	3	261	19.8%
	4	649	49.2%
Get ideas of art and craft design through ICT	5	315	23.9%
	1	26	2.0%
	2	58	4.4%
	3	283	21.5%
	4	600	45.5%
To create and manage blog, webpage or group	5	352	26.7%
	1	27	2.0%
	2	90	6.8%
	3	301	22.8%
	4	595	45.1%
Learn and practice any dance, painting, rangoli, craft, music or anything according to interest	5	306	23.2%
	1	30	2.3%
	2	67	5.1%
	3	263	19.9%
Get various suggestions for home decoration through ICT	4	623	47.2%
	5	336	25.5%
	1	24	1.8%
	2	68	5.2%
	3	234	17.7%
	4	628	47.6%
	5	365	27.7%

5. Strongly Agree 4. Agree 3. Undecided 2. Disagree 1. Strongly Disagree

More than three fourth of the women respondents strongly agree and agree that ICT enabled them to acquire Entrepreneurial and Employability Skills such as Information about Various Taxes (74.1%), get knowledge about National and International markets (74.1%), Information regarding money order and courier services (75.3%), Regarding the payment of income tax (72.3%), buy or selling any property (70.1%), establish a new company or business (70.1) and know insurance plans (70.6%).

It is also inferred that majority of the respondents strongly felt (24.6%) and agree (46.8%) that know the women reservation in various fields, and strongly agree (24.9%) and agree (47.9%). They also strongly felt ideas

of art and craft design through ICT (26.7%).

## **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

Empowering women always bring better prospects in overall development of a nation. An important aspect of empowerment in the context of ICTs is gaining a clear picture as to the type of technologies and technological interventions being used by women. There is a consensus today among the researchers that improved access to ICTs can assist in providing women with employment resources and opportunities that could narrow the gender wage gap, assist in making education and health information more accessible, contribute to the end of violence against women, and lead to women's empowerment and leadership.

The respondents who chose to strongly agree with acquiring knowledge of global culture and civilization through ICT formed 27.4% while the category that chose to agree formed 48.7%. A majority of the rural respondents forming 27.4% strongly agreed with the statement that ICT enables to know about art of living with excellence followed by 48.7% that chose to agree. It was 29.5% that chose to strongly agree with the statement that Get all the knowledge related to kitchen such as- new recipes, new useful appliances etc through ICT followed by 45.6% that chose to agree. They could also availed internet to know about new place to visit and travel. It is also inferred that 20% -25% of the surveyed respondents were undecided and disagree that ICT enabled them to update knowledge, since they were not familiar with the use of Internet and ICT.

It is imperative for any society and education system to develop and ensure the participation of women and seeking and valuing their perception in social and community activities, understanding and making aware of social and professional issues suddenly enhance the possibility of entrepreneurship among the rural women. ICT make aware of activities/events, (72%) in society, to share the location to the well-wishers when they were having trouble and share the location time to time with family and friends when they are out. And more than 45% of the rural women agreed all the above statements. It is also inferred that majority of the respondents strongly felt (24.6%) and agree (46.8%) that know the women reservation in various fields, and strongly agree (24.9%) and agree (47.9%). They also strongly felt ideas of art and craft design through ICT (26.7%).

The study sought to accelerate the adoption of ICT tools and technologies among rural women for employability and rural entrepreneurship, and it succeeded to some

extent by educating and familiarising respondents with ICT tools and applications on employability, business, and entrepreneurship opportunities through direct communication and questionnaire distribution. It is encouraging to see how rural women view using ICT to develop their leadership, entrepreneurial, and employment skills.

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