

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE FINAL REPORT OF WORK DONE IN THE MAJOR  
RESEARCH PROJECT

Sl.No	PARTICULARS	
1.	<b>Title of the Project</b>	A Study Of Women Empowerment And Sustainability Through Information And Communication Technology In The Rural Areas Of Tamil Nadu And Pondicherry.
2.	<b>Name and Address of the Principal Investigator</b>	Dr.K.S.Krithika Assistant Professor and Head i/c Department of Visual Communication Pondicherry University Community College Lawspet Pondicherry – 605008.
3.	<b>Name and Address of the Institution</b>	Pondicherry University Community College Lawspet Pondicherry India – 605008
4.	<b>UGC Approval letter No. and Date</b>	F. No. 5-297/2014(HRP) dated 08/10/2015
5.	<b>Date of Implementation</b>	10/12/2015
6.	<b>Tenure of the Project</b>	3 Years from 01/07/2015 to 30/06/2018.
7.	<b>Total grant allocated</b>	Rs. 13,08,600/-
8.	<b>Total grant Received</b>	Rs. 10,07,600/-
9.	<b>Final Expenditure</b>	Rs. 10,43,240/-

**10. Objectives of the Project:**

1. To measure the influence of the information on social empowerment of women.
2. To measure the influence of the information on economic empowerment of women.
3. To understand the relevance of the information in the development of self- realization and confidence in women and making them less dependent.
4. To study the increase in access to resources after their access to information.
5. To find out the development of women in recognizing and analysing their problems and the involvement of women in community group activities after the increased access to information through kiosk.
6. To measure the influence of the information on women's role in the decision making process at home.
7. To study the ICT access among rural women in places that had heavy ICT dissemination during a period.
8. To understand the skills access of rural women in accessing Information and Communication Technologies, to make it user friendly.
9. To study whether achieving digital sustainability is possible after the discontinuation of ICT services by the kiosks.
10. To study what perceptions do women construct about the role of ICTs in their lives?

## **11. Whether the objectives were achieved?**

Yes. The objectives are achieved.

An inferential analysis of the mean values show that the empowerment of women who use internet every day is lesser than women who access every two days and once a week. Since the difference in mean values is much lesser we can claim the association between the two factors to be significant.

An inferential analysis of the mean values of learning computer course in kiosk has not brought any significant difference to their decision making powers or control over the issues that affect their lives. Hence, Learning Computer course in a kiosk has not got a significant influence on Empowerment.

Learning Computer course in a kiosk has not influenced women's access to digital media continuously. Frequency of accessing internet in a kiosk has a significant influence on frequency of using Internet now. Learning Computer course in kiosk has not influenced the empowerment of women. Based on tests of individual factors of empowerment like Access, welfare, control, mobilisation and conscientisation with learning computer course at the kiosk when it was functioning, it is concluded that a knowledge of computers from the kiosk has not empowered them as majority of them stop using computers once the kiosk is closed. Though access to digital media has a significant positive influence on women's empowerment. Sustainability issues in digital access and use can be witnessed.

Moreover, analysis of quantitative data prove that learning computer course in a kiosk does not have a significant influence on Material access, Motivational access, skills access or usage access to digital media.

## **12. Achievements of the Project:**

This project has been successful in finding out the loopholes in ICT projects initiated by many organisations. There has been numerous ICT projects run by governments and non-governmental organisations for rural development all around the world. Huge sums of money have been spent on this. Though the projects are successful enough in taking digital media to the hitherto unreached or have-nots, that is possible only until the completion of the projects. Once the funds are exhausted and project period is over, the digital facilities provided to the people are withdrawn, which naturally takes them back to their old self. This effectively brings no change in their digital access or infuse development in their status. The assumed development is thereby short lived making the endeavours ineffective. So, this project has carefully recorded the ineffectiveness of the ICT projects in bringing about any change in the digital access or development/empowerment of the rural women. It has questioned the sustainability quotient of ICT access and development after the tenure of ICT projects in rural areas.

The project has also suggested effective methods to work out successful ICT initiatives, like starting the endeavours at the grass roots level, from the side of the local community themselves with the constant support of the government, instead of providing it from outside by an external organisation for a limited period of time.

The project also assessed the smart phone usage status of the selected villages and also did an experimental study to find out the difficulties faced by the women at the user interface level and at the domestic level in accessing a smart phone for their development.

The finding of the project were presented in the Annual conference of International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) conducted in Jun 2018 at

the University of Oregon, USA. And, it was well received by the media experts, academicians and scholars from different parts of the world.

The findings of the projects are published in one paper and many other papers are in the pipeline, for publication in standard international and national journals, so that the findings can be shared and used by the academic and research community. The findings would be soon published as a book.

### **13. Summary of findings (in 500 words):**

A summary of the findings of the quantitative study reveals that Frequency of Using Computer/Internet has reduced considerably compared to the period when kiosk was functioning. 43% of rural women have difficulty in accessing Computer and Internet, 43.7% of women find it is easy to have access. Still, barely 7% of the women access Computer/internet every day and only over 9% of women use computers 'once a week'. And, most of this usage is to watch movies or songs for entertainment.

Whereas, the usage of smartphone is relatively on a higher side. 66.23% of the respondents own a smart phone, 25.5% of women are using it 'everyday', 24.5% are using it 'Once a week' and 32.1% of rural women are using Smart Phones 'occasionally'.

When it comes to access to media for information, TV is stated as the most informative media with a mean score of 4.748, Mobile in the next place with 4.579 as mean score, print media with 3.815 and computer/internet with a mean score of 3.656.

22.4% of rural women have easy access to Computer and Internet, 32.5% of women says that it is very easy to have access to it and 19.2% of women recorded difficulty in accessing it. 49% of women said that they use internet every day and 25% using internet occasionally.

Majority of the samples who reported to have known or used the information kiosks, denied that their usage of internet is because of the training that they received from the kiosk. Though 41.1% of women reported to have learnt computers from the kiosk, they also revealed the fact that they don't have access to computers after the kiosk was closed and so they are forgetting the mode of operation of the computers.

The correlation coefficient between Material access and Motivational access is 0.594, which indicate 59.4% positive relationship between Material access and Motivational access and is significant at 1% level. The correlation coefficient between Material access and Skills access is 0.562, which indicates 56.2% positive relationship between Material and Skills access and is significant at 1% level. The correlation coefficient between Material and Usage access is 0.411, which indicates 41.1% positive relationship between Material and Usage access and is significant at 1% level and similarly the other factors are positively correlated with each other. A correlation test of frequency women's access to internet now is not correlated to their access to internet in the kiosk. Women who learnt to operate computers on their own have almost equal frequency of access to computers, as much as the women who learnt computer course in the kiosk. Which means that their taking up a computer course in the kiosk has not brought significantly higher access to computers or internet.

Over 80% of the women have affirmed access to internet for developing their knowledge, whereas only 53% of rural women stated that they have used internet when the kiosk was there in their village and 47% of women said that they have not used internet in the kiosk. There is no association between Usage of Internet in Kiosk and Finding relevant information. The Usage access table 4.40 also shows that 69.87% of the women use internet 'To know information /current affairs', 63.91% 'For entertainment', 63.25% of the women have used internet 'To update routine household chores', 59.60% of the women have used it 'For their children's education/ health details', 55.30% of the women

have used it 'To know exam results', 54.97% of the women have used it 'To know on job guidance / opportunities' and 52.98% of the women have used it 'To know information /current affairs'. But, the frequency of access to internet now is not correlated with their access to internet in the kiosk.

An inferential analysis of the same from the mean values of the variables show that age is not a significant factor in defining the Digital media access.

The descriptive table shows that Self-Employed women tend to access digital media more than House wives and other private employees.

The mean value shows that the access to digital media is very high among the graduates, both Post graduate degree holders and Undergraduate degree holders when compared to the people with an educational status at the Higher Secondary level. And the digital media access of illiterate women is significantly less when compared to the educated women.

The mean value shows that the access to digital media is very high among the people with income above 20,000/month and it gradually reduces with the reduction in income.

The inference that can be drawn from the mean values is that the usage of internet in home computer definitely is more significant in influencing the empowerment, though the difference is not very high.

There is a significant difference among Usage of internet by rural women with regard to the factors of empowerment. The mean values show that the women who have learnt computer course in the kiosk and in their College have almost similar influences on empowerment. A significant detail to be noted here is that the difference between the empowerment of women who learnt computer course and women who learnt it on their own is not very significant. The empowerment variables values of women who have not learnt computers were also high enough. So, an inference that can be drawn from these mean values is that though there is an association between the empowerment and knowledge of using computers, the influence of computers on empowerment is not highly significant.

An inferential analysis of the mean values prove that learning computer course in the kiosk has not brought out any significant difference in their material, motivational, skills and usage access to digital media when compared to their learning computer on their own. Access to digital media does create some impact on the empowerment of rural women. An inferential analysis show that though learning 'computer course' in the kiosk has mean value lesser than learning computers by 'self-try'. This shows that learning computer course in kiosk has not brought any significant difference in their access to information resources.

An inferential analysis of the mean values show that though learning 'computer course' in the kiosk has mean value lesser than learning computers in 'College' and by 'Self-try'. And people who have not learned computers also did not show any significant difference in Welfare factors. This shows that learning computer course in kiosk has not brought any significant difference in their Welfare status.

An inferential analysis of the mean values show that though learning 'computer course' in the kiosk has mean value lesser than learning computers by 'Self-try' and it has a mean value equal to that of learning computers in 'College'. And people who have not learned computers also did not show any significant difference in conscientisation factors. This shows that learning computer course in kiosk has not brought any significant difference to their conscientisation levels.

An inferential analysis of the mean values show that though learning 'computer course' in the kiosk has mean value lesser than learning computers in 'College'. And people who have not learned computers also did not show any significant difference in mobilisation factors. This shows that learning computer course in kiosk has not brought any significant

difference to their mobilisation levels.

An inferential analysis of the mean values show that though learning 'computer course' in the kiosk has mean value almost equal to people who learnt computers in 'College' and also to people who actually 'have not learnt to operate computers'. Hence, the inference drawn from these values is that learning computer course in kiosk has not brought any significant difference to their decision making powers or control over the issues that affect their lives.

The mean values in the above table shows that the material, motivational access of women who have learnt computer operation on their own is more than the women who had learnt computers from the kiosk. There is no big difference in the digital skills access of women who learnt computers on their own and women who learnt operating computers from the kiosk. The women who learnt computers from the kiosk have a slightly higher Usage access to digital media than women who learnt on their own. The mean score shows that the overall access to digital media is higher for the women who learnt computers on their own than for women who learnt computers from the kiosk.

Recommendations for an effective ICT initiative has also been suggested in the study.

**14. Contributions to the society (Give details)**

The huge amount of money spent on bridging the digital divide should not be wasted on ineffective ICT projects. The study has gone to the grass roots and found out the ineffectiveness of these projects in bringing about a sustainable solution for digital access. This can be an eye opener for the current and future ICT initiatives of the government and Non- Governmental organisations. This will help them plan their initiatives in a better way.

**15. Whether any PhD enrolled/produced out of the project:**

No.

**16. No. of Publications out of the Project:**

One paper is published in a UGC certified journal 'International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research. Three other papers and a book are in the pipeline.



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