

Impact of ICT on Empowerment of Women in the Rural Areas of Assam



Jayanta Baruah

Abstract: *Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) brings ample opportunities for the comprehensive social and economic development of the people of the whole world. The chance for countries or regions to develop without the adaption of ICTs will be little. Therefore, the ICTs have been increasingly promoted as a key solution for comprehensive development, poverty elimination and the women empowerment and can be used to eliminate discrimination, establish social justice, achieve equality, well-being and participation in decisions and policy formations that impact the quality of their lives. ICTs are emerging as a vital means for women empowerment in a developing country like India. It has proven to be a powerful tool for enhancement of one's productivity and hence economic upliftment, reduction of manual efforts, high living standard, and above all, quick and fast alignment with the developments in the rest of the world. Women empowerment is an important concept in the present day context. In a democratic country active participation of people in the polity is a must to make the democratic government successful. It has been observed that women have been deprived in all concern of their life in the world in general and in India is Particular. But a country can't achieve its desired goals without depriving its half of the population, the women community. In our paper we will try examine the impact of ICTs on the empowerment of women in the rural areas of Assam, specially the women of Sonitpur district, Assam, India. To make our research successful, we have considered 40 women as sample considering 10 each from House wife, Girl Students, Service women and Wage Earner women of the district. A questionnaire will be prepared for data collection. Simple random sampling method will be adopted in selecting samples for our research.*

Key words: Awareness, Education, Empowerment, ICT, Social Change.

I. INTRODUCTION

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become an integral part of mankind in contemporary times. It is globally accepted truth that information technology provides immense opportunities for economical, social and educational development of the people. Development circles such as the World Bank, the United Nation Development Program-UNDP, and United Nations Development Fund for Women-UNIFEM believe that ICT symbolizes an exceptional enabling instrument when deployed and used properly.

According to Abbasi, ICT represents a unique “knowledge-based social Infrastructure” which can be of great help for women to evade marginalization (Abbasi, 2001). Ningo argued that development cannot be achieved Though ICT without taking gender issues into consideration (Ningo, 1999). ICT can provide ample opportunity to enhance women's access to information and knowledge, as women are the least educated and marginalized, especially in developing countries. ICT is an umbrella term that includes any communication device or application, encompassing: radio, television, cellular phones, computer etc. Technology has rapidly changed the life styles of people and recent past has witnessed technological impact on rural India. However, urban-rural gap, poverty in rural India, education, gender disparity, maternal health and various cultural problems in rural India continue to be issues of concern. It is a matter of great concern that without ignoring half of the population, the women community, a nation cannot achieve its goals. The latest and fastest development in the ICT sector in the world has given the nations space for their development. ICT sector has contributed a lot for India's all-round development. According to the report, it is estimated that every year about 6 million women are missing in the world. Of these, 23 percent never born, 10 percent are missing in early childhood, 21 percent in the reproductive years, and 38 percent above the age of 60. It is very unfortunate that throughout their lives, even before birth, women in developing countries are treated differently than their brothers, lagging behind men in many domains. For each missing woman, the percentage is very high who fail to get education, job, or political responsibility that they would have obtained if they had been men (The World Bank (2011), (2012). It has already been said that without ignoring half of the population, the women community, a nation cannot achieve its goals. The latest and fastest development in the ICT sector in the world has given the nations space for their development. ICT sector has contributed a lot for India's all-round development. Hence, ICTs can be regarded as the important tool for women empowerment in India. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are technological apparatus and resources to create, circulate, store, bring value-addition and manage information. The ICT sector includes diverse segments such as telecommunications, television and radio broadcasting, computer hardware, software and services and electronic media etc. ICTs are mounting as a powerful tool for gender empowerment in a developing country like India. There are plentiful possibilities for ICTs to improve the conditions of women- social, economic, political, education, health and crafts.

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* Correspondence Author

Dr. Jayanta Baruah*, Associate Professor and Head in the Department of Political Science, T.H.B. College, Jamugurihat, Sonitpur, Assam, affiliated to Gauhati University.

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The issue of 'Women Empowerment' came into focus since mid 1980's owing to questioning by women themselves about their oppressed status and plight through varied women's movements. Empowerment of women is necessary in all sphere, particularly in political sphere is crucial for their advancement and for the foundation of gender equal society. Empowerment of women is central to the goals of equality, development and peace. Though Indian democracy has completed 72 years of its existence but a large section of women are kept out of political arena till today. It can be said that there would be no true democracy, or no true people's participation in governance and development without equal participation of men and women at different levels of decision making. Participation of women in political life is integral to the advancement of women. ICT brings lot of openings to women in the work situations and small business. Teleporting, flexi time and work from home arrangements are some of the gender magnitudes of ICT's usages (Meel, 2012).

II. METHODOLOGY:

The paper is mainly be empirical in nature and based on primary data. Besides, collection and discussion of primary data, secondary data and pertinent literature will be complied, discussed and review accordingly. A questionnaire is prepared and used for the collection of data. Interview and interaction method has also been adopted.

III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

1. To find out the level of women's empowerment through ICTs in rural areas.
2. To find out the percentage of socio and economic inclusion of rural women by ICTs.
3. To identify the barriers of usage of ICTs by women.

IV. SAMPLING:

We have considered 40 women as sample for our paper considering 10 each from House wife, Girl Students, Service women and Wage Earner women. Samples have been considered from Sonitpur district of which majority are from the greater Naduar area of the district. Simple random sampling method has been used while selecting samples.

V. PROFILE OF THE AREA OF THE STUDY:

Sonitpur is an administrative district in the state of Assam in India. Sonitpur lies between the extension of $27^{\circ}15''$ North to $26^{\circ}30'38''$ North Latitude and $92^{\circ}18'38''$ East to $93^{\circ}49'15''$ East Longitude. There are two sub-divisions in the district such as Tezpur and Dhekiajuli. Tezpur is the district headquarters. The boundaries of the district are as follows: In the northern part of the district, there is Arunachal Pradesh, in the southern part there is Brahmaputra River, in the eastern part there is Biswanath district and in the western part there is Darrang district.

VI. UNDERSTANDING WOMEN EMPOWERMENT:

Women empowerment is the most used and discussed term in the present day context. The term 'Empowerment of Women' becomes an increasingly popular term in human rights and developmental discourses. Women play important role in all walks of life. Hence, Empowerment of women is a necessary basic condition for all-round development of any society.

Although women constitute one half of the population, they continue to be subjugated, deprived in all respects socio-economic and political in every society in the world. Women have been struggling for self-respect and autonomy. The issue of 'Women Empowerment' came into focus since mid 1980's owing to questioning by women themselves about their oppressed status and plight through varied women's movements. Empowerment of women is necessary in all sphere, particularly in political sphere is crucial for their advancement and for the foundation of gender equal society. Empowerment of women is central to the goals of equality, development and peace. Though Indian democracy has completed 72 years of its existence but a large section of women are kept out of political arena till today. It can be said that there would be no true democracy, or no true people's participation in governance and development without equal participation of men and women at different levels of decision making. Participation of women in political life is integral to the advancement of women. According to Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), 'Everyone has the right to take part in the government of the country, directly or through the freely chosen representatives'. It is important to note that proper representation of women in political affairs will ensure their views and needs reflected in public policies that affect their lives most. Bargava and Subha define political empowerment 'as the capacity to influence decision making process, planning, implementation and evaluation by integrating them into the political system. It implies political participation which includes right to vote, contest, campaign, party membership and representation in political office at all levels and effectively influences decisions thereby leading to political empowerment' (Bhargava, 2007). According to Siwal, 'Political Empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation, greater decision making power and control and to transformative action.' (B.R.Siwal, 2009). Political empowerment refers to the process by which women acquire due recognition along with their male counterpart, to participate in the developmental process and activity of the society through the political institutions as a partner with human dignity.

Political empowerment implies a distinct role for women in the formation of policies and influencing decision-making process by integrating them into the political system. The percentage of representation of women community of India in institutional politics since independence is not encouraging. Women's percentage of participation in political institutions became a matter of great concern in India and this concern was the topic of hot debate in the last two decades. Political thinkers knew that a democratic government will not be successful ignoring half of the population-the women community, in the policy or decision making process of the government. Hence, tried to increase the participation of women to make Indian democracy a success into its real sense that leading to empowerment. Indian leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru always advocated the upliftment of the status of women for progressive and successful nation building

Pandit Nehru once said, "You can tell me the condition of a nation by looking at the status of its women."

Accordingly, the Constitution of India provides right to equality. The Constitution also empowers the states to adopt measures to upgrade the conditions of women from their disadvantageous status in terms of socio-economic, education and political scenario. Despite all efforts, Indian women are still to be empowered socially, economically and politically at par with their male counterparts. The male dominated and biased Indian society can be cited as the main factor in this concern. The passing of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments Act of 1993 and 1994 can be regarded as the great effort for the rights of women in India which has been recognized and given the women community a chance to participate in the policy or decision making process of the government, though not fully. The table given below will show the low percentage of participation of women in Lok Sabha, the lower house of Indian Parliament, since Independence.

Table-1: Percentage of Participation of Women in Lok Sabha since Independence

Lok Sabha	Total Nos of Seats(Election held)	No. of Women members who won	%
First(1952)	489	22	4.4
Second(1957)	494	27	5.4
Third(1962)	494	34	6.7
Fourth(1967)	523	31	5.9
Fifth(1971)	521	22	4.2
Sixth(1977)	544	19	3.4
Seventh(1980)	544	28	5.1
Eight(1984)	544	44	8.1
Ninth(1989)	529	28	5.3
Tenth(1991)	509	36	7.0
Eleventh(1996)	541	40*	7.4
Twelfth(1998)	545	44*	8.0
Thirteenth(1999)	543	48*	8.8
Fourteenth(2004)	543	45*	8.1
Fifteenth(2009)	543	59	10.9
Sixteenth(2014)	543	61	11.2
Seventeenth(2019)	542	78	14.3

*Including one nominated member. Source: Election Commission of India.

1. Education of the Respondents:

Education is one of the pillars of women empowerment because it enables them to respond to challenges, to confront their traditional role and change their life. It is one of the ways to spread the message of women empowerment. Education not only educates a person but also helps to realize her that she is an integral part of the society. To face the challenges of technological problems education will only help women to empower through the knowledge of science and technology. It also helps them in acquiring information through the computer all over the world. Education not only educates a woman but also prepares them to take own decisions and accept responsibilities at her home and in the work place. Education helps a woman to understand her rights to equal treatment like a man in the society of this country. It is very important to note that education is a primary condition to use ICT. An illiterate woman will be in trouble to use ICT. Data shows a very discouraging picture that only 29.0 percent Indian women use internet. It is also note worthy that there is a

big gap between man and women in matters of using ICT in Indian society. In India, only 28.0 percent women own a cell phone while the percentage of men is 43.0 percent. In a research conducted in semi-rural areas of Madhya Pradesh revealed that a majority of the women who owned a cell phone did not know how to operate the phone. The illiterate women could not dial a number or read messages; most did not know their mobile numbers and had to ask their husbands. Their cell phone usage was mostly limited to pressing the green button when the phone rang (Mishra, 2017). The table given below will show the educational qualifications that our respondents possess.

Table-2: Educational Qualifications of respondent

Educational Qualifications of respondents	House Wife	%	Girl Student	%	Service Women	%	Wae Earner	%
Illiterate	1	10	0	0	0	0	9	90
HSLC	3	30	1	10	0	0	1	10
HSSLC	4	40	4	40	2	20	0	0
Graduate	2	20	5	50	8	80	0	0
Above	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

2. Age of the Respondents:

Age is an important factor of a person in his or her life. As like that age becomes a vital factor of the respondents of a research work. A person can work hard in his/her early life which will be difficult for him/her in their older days. In our paper we have considered 40 women respondents from different age group. The following table will show the fact.

Table-3: Age of the respondents

Age of the Respondents	No. of Respondents	%
0-16	03	7.5
16-25	08	20.0
25-35	18	45.0
35-50	09	22.5
50-65	02	5.0

Data shows in the above table that majority 45.0 percent of our respondents are from the 25-35 age groups and in this age most people tries to achieve the best for their life.

3. Knowledge over Women Reservation Bill:

The Women’s Reservation Bill is pending in the Indian parliament since 2008. The bill would have been the torch bearer for the women empowerment in India which proposed to reserve 33.0 percent of seats for women in Lok Sabha, the lower house of Parliament of India, and in all State Legislative Assemblies in India. Though women empowerment became the hot topic for debate for last two decade but our politicians are not willing to make women empowered by sacrificing 33.0 percent seats. The Women’s Reservation Bill is also known as the Constitution (108th Amendment) Bill. It has been observed that in the period of UPA government from 2004 to 2014 most of the people in India hoped that the bill would be passed as there were three women holding prestigious position in the government. But the hopes of the people did not turn into reality.

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People of India are still not giving up their hopes and they think that P.M Modi led 2.0 government would make the dreams of the people into reality seeing that a numbers of tough decisions have already been taken by this government. To test the awareness level of our respondents a question was asked, "Do you know about the Women Reservation Bill?" Responding to our question a majority 67.5 percent (27 out of 40) respondent responded positively while 30.0 percent (12 out of 40) respondent replied negatively to our question. Only 01 respondent did not respond to the question. It is a great sign that our respondents are aware about their rights. It is good for a democratic polity. Table given below will reflect the facts.

Table-4: Knowledge over Women Reservation Bill

Knowledge over Women Reservation Bill	No. of Respondents	%
Yes	27	67.5
No	12	30.0
Did not Response	01	2.5
Total	40	100

It is very interesting that while asked about the source of information, a huge 81.48 percent (22 out of 27) replied that TV and Radio were the source of this information. 18.51 percent replied that their source of information was the internet. It transpires that women of our rural areas are enjoying the benefits of ICT. But it is also to be noted that 30.0 percent of our respondents are still unaware about the day today happenings as their answer was negative to our question. This is not a good sign for a democratic polity.

4. Voting Age reduced:

With the motto to make India a successful democracy and a strongest nation in the world by giving the educated and enlighten youths a chance to participate in active politics of the nation, the 61st Constitutional Amendments in 1988 passed in the parliament which lowered the voting age from 21 to 18. It is worth mentioning that while asked about this amendment the reply of 50.0 percent respondents were positive. 37.5 percent of respondents replied negatively and 12.0 percent still in the darkness about this important amendment. The following table will reflect the fact.

Table-5: Knowledge over reduce of voting age in India

Knowledge over reduce of voting age in India	No. of Respondents	%
yes	20	50.0
No	15	37.5
No response	05	12.0

Again, while asked about the source of this information a huge majority 80.0 percent (16 out of 20) replied that they knew it from the News of TV and Radio. 20.0 percent (04 out of 20) of our respondents replied that their source of information was the internet.

5. Knowledge over Women M.P. in Lok Sabha (Lower House):

To test the level of political awareness of the respondents a question was put forwarded to them as, "How many women MPs are in the Lok Sabha at present?" It is very unfortunate that only a few 30.0 percent (12 out of 40) answered

positively to the question. A notable 35.0 percent of our respondents replied negatively while 35.0 percent did not response. Democratic government will be successful when its citizens are aware about their political system and conscious about their rights and duties. In our research it has been come to the light that women in the rural areas of Assam are still unaware about their political system. As an integral part of Indian democracy women should know about the Indian polity as well as numbers of women representatives in Indian Parliament.

While asked about the source of this information majority of them replied that T.V, Radio and social media like Whatsapp and internet was the source of this information.

6. Knowledge over Women MLAs in Assam Legislative Assembly:

Election to the Assam Legislative Assembly was held in the month of April, 2016. It is pertinent to mention that as like the national level in Assam also political parties are not interested to give tickets to women. Data shows that in the 2011 assembly election there were 14 women representatives in the assembly with 11.1 percent in the 126 member assembly. But in the last assembly election the number of women representatives lowered to 08 which are 6.35 percent. Indian National Congress conferred highest tickets to 16 women candidates and the result was 03. BJP provided tickets to 06 of which 02 won, AGP conferred tickets to 02 and the result was 01 and BPF provided ticket to 02 and the result is 02 (PTI, 2016). It is also to be noted that though 92, 09,928 female voters casted their votes in the last assembly election in Assam but the above result has highlighted that the women voters are not concern to select representatives from their own community.

A similar question was forwarded to the respondents to know their political awareness as, "How many women MLAs are there in the Assam Legislative Assembly at present?" Responding to our question a few 17.5 (07 Out of 40) replied correctly. 55.0 percent (22 out of 40) replied negatively while 27.5 percent did not response. The result shows a dismal picture that the citizens are not aware about their political system which is a matter of great concern in a democratic polity.

Again, while asked them about the source most of them replied that T.V, Radio, and internet were the main source of this information.

7. Knowledge relating to the name of the women President of India:

Pratibha Devisingh Patil was the 12th President of India from 2007-2012. She was the maiden women in India to hold this prestigious office. Respondents of our research were asked the name of the only women president of India to test their level of political participation. Out of the total 40 respondents a huge majority 70.0 percent (28 out of 40) answered positively. A few 20.0 percent did not response correctly and the remaining 10.0 did not response. Here also we can say that 30.0 percent respondents are still ignorant about the political system. Source of information was TV and Radio for a majority of 57.14 percent (16 out of 28) respondents. Internet was the source of information for 42.85 percent (12 out of 28) respondents.

8. Participation in Panchayatiraj Institutions:

Panchayati Raj Institutions can be regarded as the basic unit of Indian democracy. Through the participation in Panchayats people can solve their own problem through electing their representatives. To make panchayats a vibrant unit of democracy 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments were passed in 1993 and panchayats were given constitutional status. Again, women were given the chance to participate actively in politics that means for their empowerment 33.0 percent of seats are reserved for women which are increased to 50.0 percent in some states in India. We have put forwarded a questions like “Do you know how many seats are reserve for women in Panchayat?” and “Have you ever elected as a member of Panchayat?” The result of our research shows that all the respondents were participated in the last panchayat election of Assam held in two phases in December, 5 and 9, 2018. But they are not fully concern about the percentage of reservation for women in panchayats. Majority 57.5 percent (23 out of 40) has given correct answer to this question. While 32.5 percent (13 out of 40) replied negatively and the remaining 10.0 percent did no response. On the other hand, all the respondents of our paper were never contested as candidate in panchayat election.

9. Knowledge relating to the welfare Schemes for women by Assam Government:

The Governments of India have been trying to uplift the conditions of the women by formulating various schemes for their welfare since independence. Ujjawala, Nirbhaya and Nari Shakti Puraskar are some of the notable schemes formulated by the Central Government for the welfare of women community. The governments of Assam have also been trying for the upliftment of women. The present Assam government is no exception. Considering the importance of economic development of women, Assam government has formulated a scheme to provide 0.1 million each to all registered Self- Help Groups. To help the pregnant women of tea garden areas of Assam 550 million has already been allotted in the financial year 2019-20. Through this scheme 48000 women in every year will be benefitted. Scholarship schemes for girl child of minority communities have also been implemented by the Assam government. While presenting Annual Budget of Assam in the Assam Legislative Assembly for the financial year 2019-20, Assam finance Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sharma announced a scheme which will provide 1 tola gold (11.6638038 grams) to the brides of all communities (PTI, Assam Government to Gift 1 Tola Gold to Brides, 2019). The condition to avail this scheme is to formal registration of marriage under Marriage Registration Rules 1954. Recently, the government of Assam has taken a scheme for waiver of mess dues for the hostel boarders of colleges and universities of Assam. The scheme will help the students by providing them Rs. 700 per month. The benefit of this scheme will cover the girl students also. Free admissions up to Post-Graduate level has also been continuing in Assam for last several years. The benefit of this scheme is also enjoying by the girl students. So the government of Assam has been formulated different schemes for the all round development of women in Assam. Finally, to test their empowerment level we have forwarded a question relating to various schemes formulated by the government of Assam for the welfare of women. The question is “Do you know about various schemes that have been formulated by the Assam government for the welfare of women community of Assam?”. It is very

unfortunate that most of the respondents are not aware about the schemes that have been formulated for them. It is specially to be noted that mostly our girl students are not interested to know about the schemes of the government. Secondly, service women are also less interested to know about these schemes. The percentage of house wife and wage earner are high in this context. The following table will highlight the fact.

Table-6: Knowledge over schemes of Assam government for women welfare

Knowledge over schemes of Assam government for women welfare	No. of Respondents	%
Yes	18	45.0
No	13	32.5
No Response	09	22.5

The results shown in the above table clearly indicates that women of the rural areas of Assam still to be empowered fully. These schemes have been formulated for the welfare of the women community hence, they should be conscious about it. Again, 22.5 percent (09 out of 40) of our respondents are observed total silence on the issue. So such type activity is not suitable for the citizens of a democratic country.

While asked about the source of these information most of our respondents 55.0 percent (10 out of 18) have replied that the main sources of these information were TV and Radio. The remaining 08 respondents received this information through internet.

VII. FINDINGS:

The research conducted by us to examine the impact of ICTs on women empowerment in the rural areas of Assam is successful in bringing some of the important factors into the limelight. Some of the important findings are as follows:

- Education is the only means which can show the light to everyone to live a decent standard of life. In every political system, especially in democratic political system every citizen must be educated to make democracy successful in its real sense. But the data of our paper has highlighted a dismal picture in this context. It has been found that among the 40 respondents 90.0 percent of the wage earner category was illiterate. As like that 10.0 percent of respondents are illiterate in the House wife category. Equality is regarded as basic principles in a democratic country. Hence, ignoring a large section of people of our society a democratic government would not be successful. It is worth mentioning that data published in a news item on the Literacy Day observed on 8 September, 2019, highlighted that literacy rate of women in rural India is 56.8 percent and percentage of men in rural India is 72.2 percent. The percentage of literacy rate of women in urban area is 74.8 percent while the percentage of men is 79.5 percent (Singh, 2019). Hence, data discussed above clearly reflected a big gap in the rural and urban areas in matters of education. It must be reduced in the greater interest of Indian democracy. Again, fruitful use of ICT largely depends upon education.

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Therefore, every government vows to educate every women of our nation to make the concept of women empowerment a reality and to make them fit to enjoy the benefits of ICT by using it properly.

- A section of women in the rural areas of Assam are still not enjoying the benefits of ICTs for their economic backwardness. They even cannot afford a low end device for their use. Again, the Poor ICT infrastructure, inefficient telephone services, lack of electricity in many remote, far-flung areas, and frequent power cuts are regarded some of the major cause in this context.

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- To make democracy successful every citizen must be conscious about their rights and duties. They should also alert about the day today happenings of their political system. In our paper it has been observed that though respondents were positive in most of the questions forwarded to them but in some cases they showed poor knowledge while providing answers. It was a prideful moment while 67.5 percent respondents positively answered about Women Reservation Bill, 50.0 percent positively replied about the bill that reduced the voting age of Indian voters. But at the same time in some matters they showed their poor interest. As for example a few 30.0 percent of our respondents replied positively while asked about the number of women representatives in Lok Sabha, lower house of Indian Parliament. It is very unfortunate that 35.0 percent respondent responded negatively while 35.0 percent were totally in the darkness of this important factor because they did not response to our question. This is not a healthy sign for democracy. A same pattern of question regarding the number of women representatives in Assam Legislative Assembly was forwarded. It is also unfortunate that a negligible 17.5 percent respondent replied positively while a huge 55.0 percent replied negatively. It is pertinent to mention here that most of the respondents admitted that News of TV, Radio and internet helped them a lot in acquiring this knowledge. Hence, it can be said that disinterest to learn can be the main cause of failure in memorizing these answers.

- Data of our paper has clearly reflected that in imparting knowledge and information in the rural areas in Assam ICT has been playing a great role. Most of respondents of our research have admitted the great role of TV, Radio, computer and Internet in making them fit as a citizen by providing various information.

- It is important to mention here that a good number of respondents of our research are also the members of Self-Help Groups. While interacting with them it has come to light that some members of SHGs in the rural areas use WhatsApp and Facebook as means of advertisement of their products. It is a matter of pride that our women community has taken the help of ICTs to improve their economic conditions which denotes economic empowerment of women.

- Lack of knowledge over English language can also be a cause of their failure to benefit from ICTs. In remote areas

women are mostly educated with vernacular language. They acquire little knowledge on English. Hence, this cause can also be considered for their failure to benefits from ICTs.

- Lack of computer literacy programmes for women in the rural areas can also be cited as another cause of failure from benefits from ICTs. It has been observed that in the rural areas there are a few numbers of computer centres establish for providing training for the rural women. Hence, it becomes difficult for them to operate computers, fails to receive information through online. The Government of India must formulate policies to provide free and compulsory computer training.

VIII. CONCLUSION:

In last two decades there have been lots of efforts in employing Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for achieving development. While ICT initiatives have benefited rural women in acquiring new information and new employment opportunities, women still face lots of constraints in accessing ICTs. The results of our paper have found that the ICTs play an excellent role in empowering rural women. We can conclude our paper by saying that, while most of the ICT initiatives are disseminating new information and knowledge useful for rural women, many of them are not able to make use of it, due to lack of access to complementary sources of support and services. Hence, the Government of India should formulate a National Policy on ICT for the empowerment of Women community of rural India.

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AUTHORS PROFILE



About the Author: Dr. Jayanta Baruah, M.A, B.Ed, Ph.D, is serving as Associate Professor and Head in the Department of Political Science, T.H.B. College, Jamugurihat, Sonitpur, Assam, affiliated to Gauhati University. Dr. Baruah has completed his research on the Topic, 'Political Participation of Student Community: A Case Study of Sonitpur District, Assam.' He has completed two MRP sponsored by UGC. His area of interest is political participation of different tribes, caste, women studies etc. Dr. Baruah has edited a number of valuable books contributed write ups by academicians across the country. He is the life member of Indian Political Science Association, North-East Political Science Association, All Assam Political Science Association and Assam College Teachers' Association (ACTA).