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DEVELOPING A TOOL TO MEASURE THE SELF HELP GROUP WOMEN'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS ICT

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Abstract:

The trend of using ICT as a teaching tool is now rapidly expanding into day to day life. Although ICT environments are becoming popular there is minimal research on self help group women attitude towards ICT. The purpose of this study is to develop a tool to measure the attitude towards ICT among self help group women in the Indian scenario. Initially the tool was constructed with 60 statements and administered to self help group women. Out of these 60 statements 28 statements were found to be statistically valid. In order to standardize the tool the researcher applied Cronbach Alpha test, Kolmogorov-Smirnov and 't' test. The final version of the tool entitled "Self Help Group Women's Attitude towards ICT" consists of 28 statements. The 28 statements comprise of 19 positive statements and 9 negative statements. The tool consists of five point scale where by a respondent can score a maximum of 140 and a minimum score of 28.

Key Words: ICT Attitude, SHG Women, Women ICT Attitude

Introduction:

Self help group in the context of information technology is a new gateway to expanding entrepreneurship and self-employment in society. The trend of internet and information and communication technology (ICT) penetration has almost risen in all countries of the world, which promises new opportunities for creating new business. Information and communication are two essential tools needed for any developmental activities. ICT has accelerated and facilitated the movement of self help group towards entrepreneurship. Females are at the forefront of global economic development but much of the existing research on entrepreneurship has examined men entrepreneurs with less focus on females (Brush, C. G. 1992). Despite the increased number of females establishing businesses they mostly have a lower level of entrepreneurial activities than men (Langowitz, N., & Minniti, M. 2007).

Information Technology (IT) have provided a wide range of opportunities for the growth of women, so that now a day's women adopt information technology for various types of day to day responsibilities, like creating letters, producing a report, data storage, online translating and typing, programming, content production, sales and marketing. New communication tools, along with computer gains, have penetrated all aspects of human life, as we see that online retailers now using the latest techniques in information and communication technology, software, hardware, media and social networks, Electronic payment methods and many other factors have provided the people with a more stable buying environment, and many of them have been able to earn a good return on their transactions (Jia, F., Cai, S., & Xu, S., 2014).

Mobiles, SMS, email, and Internet are increasingly being used by self help group members' to connect with the customers as well as their colleagues.

Related Studies:

ICT represents a unique "knowledge based social Infrastructure" which can be of great help for women to evade marginalization (Abbasi, 2001). Ningo (1999) argued that development cannot be achieved though ICT without taking gender issues into consideration. ICT can provide sufficient 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.

ICT can be regarded as the significant tool for women empowerment in India. ICTs are technological tools 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. Information and communication technology are growing as a powerful tool for women empowerment in developing countries. There are abundant possibilities for ICTs to improve the conditions of women's social, economic, political, education, health and crafts. 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).

Information requirements of women in the new globalize background are as diverse as the socio economic scenario. Considering women, as a monolithic group will over shorten their information needs. Within women's group itself, globalisation has generated the haves and the have nots i.e those who are in a valuable position due to globalisation and those relegated further into disadvantaged position under the new economic policy. The information needs will also vary accordingly. Within women's group itself, the needs fluctuate accordingly (Sierra and Dongier, 2008).

Nimbalkar, S. K (2014) women want to acquire various information by using information technology especially economic, political social, new entrepreneurship related, Government schemes, Information sharing, information storage etc. As internet is huge source of Information and knowledge. It is also observed that information technology play vital role for women empowerment, members of self help groups viewed that if sources are available then information technology can empower women in economic, social, political and other ways. Lot of self help groups nowadays are expanding their operations in various farm related business. Various new trends are also playing vital role for business operations such as E-commerce, Online Trading, and Online Banking etc. If all members of the self help groups are get aware about this they can enjoy lots of benefits through this IT enabled services.

Prasad P.N. and V. Shridevi (2007) in their paper reported that information technology offers time and space these offers valuable resources for women especially in developing countries who suffer from limited availability of the time, social isolation and lack of assess of knowledge and productive resources. According to giant survey of Google "Around 60 million women in India are now online and use the Internet to manage their day-to-day life. With easy access to internet at homes, cyber cafes, offices and growing adoption of smart phones, Internet is being used by women for a variety of things.

Objective of the Tool:

The purpose of this study was to develop a research tool to measure the attitude of self help group women towards ICT. As such it seems that there is no research tool to measure the self help group women's attitude towards ICT in the Indian perspective and the researcher intended to construct a tool.

Methodology:

In order to develop the research tool at the preliminary stage the researcher consulted the experts on women empowerment and ICT learning, the teachers who are very much familiar with women empowerment and ICT learning, literatures on attitude towards ICT and women empowerment and also visited web sites and gathered information. Based on the information gathered as many as 60 statements were developed. Out of the 60 statements 43 were positive statements, 17 statements were negative. The response of the tool was of 5 point likert scale with the responses strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree. The responses were given the weightage of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 for strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree respectively in the case of positive statements and in the case of negative statements the weightages were kept reversed.

The tool was administered on 100 self help group women's in Theni district. The 100 self help group women's were selected. All the 100 tools, collected from the self help group women's were scored carefully. Based on the scores the tools were arranged in the descending order from the highest to the lowest. The highest 27% and lowest 27% of the respondent were taken for item analysis.

Item Analysis:

In order to select the reliable items, the researcher has used three statistical measures namely 't' value, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and Cronbach's Alpha test. To select the items the research tools collected from self help group women's were arranged on the basis of the scores in the decreasing order of magnitude. The highest 27 and lowest 27 of the respondents were identified. Totally 54 tools were taken into consideration for the analysis. Then for the higher group and the lower group the individual test item scores were scored. Using the Kolmogrov Smirnov test the equality of mean scores was tested. The mean scores that differed significantly were retained (Guilford, J.P. 1965). The Kolmogorov Smirnov test value for those items significant at 0.01 level were considered for the final tool.

The Cronbach's Alpha value was calculated for the two sets of scores for each statement. The item with the Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.5 were retained and less than 0.5 were not considered. Further, to establish the significance of the test items, the 't' value were calculated. The 't' value for the statements greater than the table value at 0.05 level has been taken into consideration.

The statements of the final tool were established based on the statistical treatments namely Cronbach's Alpha test value ranging from 0.789 to 0.994, Kolmogorov Smirnov test value ranging from 1.927 to 4.532 and 't' value ranging from 4.09 to 12.11. Out of the 60 statements 28 statements were found to be statistically valid. The final version of the tool entitled "Self Help Group Women's Attitude towards ICT" consists of 28 statements. The 28 statements comprise of 19 positive statements and 9 negative statements. The tool consists of five point scale where by a respondent can score a maximum of 140 and a minimum score of 28.

Item No.	Cronbach's Alpha	't' value	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test
1	0.82	5.12	2.71

2	0.84	7.13	3.07
3	0.83	9.01	1.99
4	0.92	6.31	2.46
5	089	5.23	2.62
6	0.84	8.12	3.82
7	0.85	7.22	2.48
8	0.86	4.09	3.11
9	0.82	6.34	2.39
10	0.81	11.23	4.25
11	0.83	5.27	1.98
12	0.89	7.18	3.22
13	0.82	10.19	4.15
14	0.88	6.22	1.92
15	0.80	9.39	3.10
16	0.83	7.62	4.53
17	0.93	5.14	3.11
18	0.93	10.76	2.57
19	0.91	9.29	4.16
20	0.80	7.55	2.62
21	0.78	8.23	2.14
22	0.87	11.45	3.33
23	0.81	12.11	2.52
24	0.99	10.62	3.65
25	0.95	11.23	4.12
26	0.79	6.47	4.08
27	0.92	5.23	3.91
28	0.86	7.12	2.28

Reliability and Validity:

The Reliability coefficient of the tool was ascertained by using the split half method, which was found to be 0.82 which is valid. In the beginning of the process of tool construction the selected statements were given to experts on educational psychology and educational technology as well as in the field of ICT and testing for their approval. They judged the appropriateness of the statements. The statements were modified with their suggestions prior to administration and thereby the content validity was ensured.

Conclusion:

This tool attitude towards ICT focuses on gathering information about the mind set of self help group women's on how far ICT improves their personal effectiveness in day to day lives and helps in promoting their empowerment. ICT is in the embryonic stage in rural areas in the Indian scenario. This is the time to read the mindset of the self help group women's and accordingly the appropriate ICT strategies may be evolved in the rural areas. This research tool will be of immense use for the researcher and government administrators, which will throw light upon the attitude of self help group women in the rural areas.

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