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Research Article

Use of ICT of Garo Women in Agriculture and Allied Sectors in the State of Meghalaya

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ABSTRACT

Present study was undertaken in availability and accessibility of different ICTs hardware. A total of hundred samples were collected for the present study. The results revealed that large percentage of the respondents have used other sources of ICTs hardware except that availability of mobile phones was more in number than other source of ICTs hardware. So far there access to different ICTs hardware was unknown to them except mobile phones. Most probably they are not aware and access to ICTs hardware for their better livelihood. The problems related to used and access ICTs hardware is due to financial problems, lack of training, lack of knowledge and so on. It is envious to know that that they have not undergone any training or awareness programmes regarding ICTs hardware.

Key words: *ICTs, Availability of ICTs, Access to ICTs, Farmers, Meghalaya*

INTRODUCTION

ICT can play a major role in enhancing the activities of poor farmers and increasing their productivity. It can help to increase access the market information or lower transaction costs of poor farmers and traders. Agriculture represents the most important life blood for the economy of Bangladesh. Access to daily prices of various agricultural commodities in major markets across the nation can add tremendous impetus to a more efficient functioning of agricultural market[3]. ICT provide information on new technologies. It also helps in providing information services to the farmers on package of practices, disease/post early warning system, weather forecasting, input supply, credit availability, crop insurance, and post harvest technology at the earliest possible time. This is the cheaper and faster to trade online than on paper based medium, telephone or fax. E-commerce enables the entrepreneurs to access global market information at their door step through websites and open up new regional and global market to promote their products that fetch better price and increase farmers earning[1].

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ICT can improve the access of the poor farmer to micro credit, government services, market information, production, storage and marketing of farm and non farm products. Further, ICT can also facilitate the generation and exchanges of community based information and stimulate the establishment of small and medium sized enterprises and expand their market base[2].

Governments in developing countries are increasingly aware that they have a major responsibility for rural development and food security, but lack the capacity and solutions to meet the challenge. The information revolution is an intervention with the potential to ensure that knowledge and information on important technologies, methods and practices are put in the right hands. Knowledge and information are basic ingredients of food security and are essential for facilitating rural development and bringing about social and economic change[4]. ICT are indeed generating possibilities to attack problems of rural poverty, inequality and environmental degradation. It enables field workers to better plan their activities and for their supervisors to more effectively monitor their performance. ICT can shorten queues and waiting time at collection counters, improve accuracy in billing and accounts receivable and provide immediate proof of payments to citizens. Use of ICT can provide up-to-date information on markets to producers, thus increasing their bargaining power. It can be used to deliver such information through kiosks located in rural areas. It can also be used to train field workers located in rural areas through innovative designs of distance learning programmes and it needs to be further deployed to train physically and socially disadvantaged groups.

ICT became an important part in the state of Meghalaya. So the study was undertaken with following objectives:

1. To study background profile of the respondents.
2. To find out the availability and accessibility to ICT of the respondents.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was carried out under AICRP Home Science Project. The study was undertaken in the three villages of West Garo Hills, Meghalaya. The selected villages were Aminda Simsang, Aminda Kongkrang and Aminda Rangsagre of Gambegre Block was selected randomly. The data was collected from 100 farm women of selected villages. The interview scheduled was prepared to know the availability and accessibility to ICT of selected farm women. The data was collected during 2018 – 2019.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1.1 Age

From fig 1.1. It is clearly indicates that large percentage (59%) of the respondents belonged to young age (18-35 years) and the least percentage (10%) of the respondents belonged to upper middle age (51 years and above). The finding shows that middle age group were more in number than upper middle age group.

1.2 Caste

It is revealed from the findings that the entire respondents were belonged to Scheduled tribe because the state of Meghalaya was dominated by tribal people.

1.3 Education

From fig 1.3 indicates that large percentage (39%) of the respondents have their education up to class X followed by 22 percent are able to read and write whereas only 1 per cent each of the respondents have education up to graduation and post graduation. The finding shows that respondents studied up to class X were more in number compared to other educational qualification.

1.4 Marital status

From Fig 1.4 indicates that large percentage (83%) of the respondents were married followed by 15 per cent of the respondents belonged to unmarried and 1 per cent each of the respondents were widow and divorcee.

1.5 Occupation

1.5.1 Main occupation

From Fig 1.5.1 it is observed that 47 per cent of the respondents belonged to daily wage earner followed by 36 per cent of the respondents belonged to farming and 17 per

cent of the respondents were engaged in government service. The finding shows that main occupation of the respondents were predominantly from daily wage earner.

1.5.2 Subsidiary occupation

From Fig 1.5.2 it reveals that 56 per cent of the respondents has farming as their subsidiary occupation followed by 39 per cent of the respondents, daily wage earner and only 5 per cent of the respondents were engaged in government service. The finding shows that subsidiary occupation of the respondents was predominated by farming.

1.6 Type of family

It is revealed from the findings that entire respondents were belonged to nuclear family. This may so happen due to the tradition of separation of daughter after marriage in a matrilineal society.

1.7 Size of family

From fig 1.7 indicates that large percentage (79%) of the respondents belonged to small family (2-4) followed by 19 per cent belonged to medium family (4-6) and 2 per cent belong to large family. It was found that all the respondents belonged to nuclear families so their family sizes are small and medium.

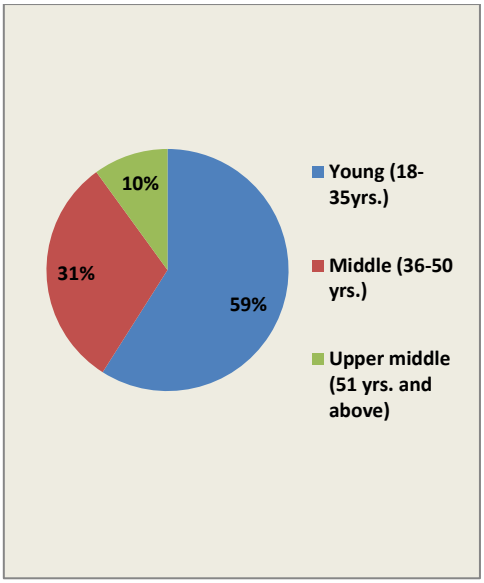

Fig. 1.1: Distribution of respondents according to their age

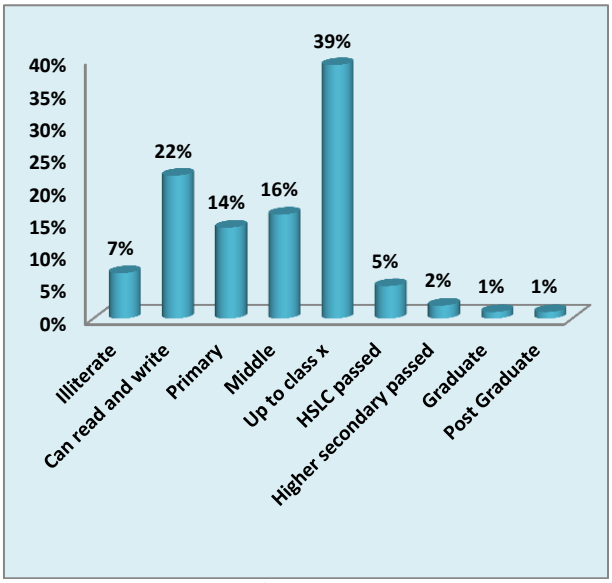

Fig. 1.2 : Distribution of respondents according to their educational qualification

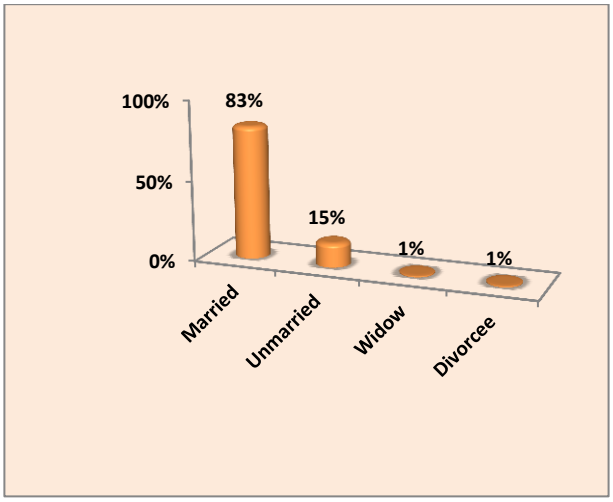

Fig. 1.3 : Distribution of respondents according to their marital status

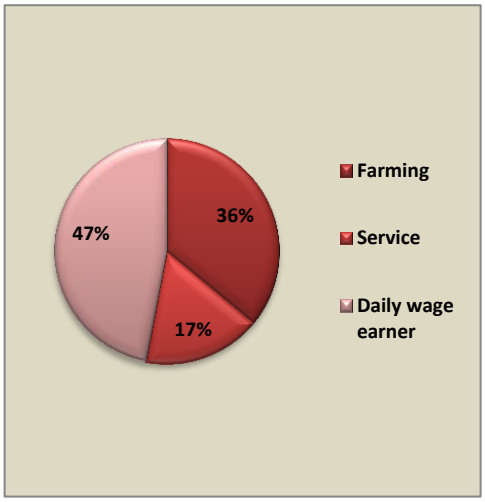

Fig. 1.4: Distribution of respondents according to their main occupation

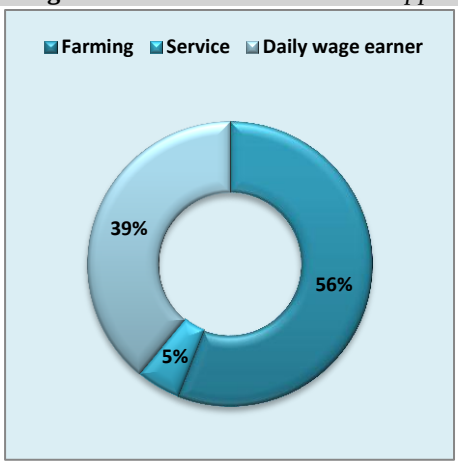

Fig. 1.5 : Distribution of respondents according to their main occupation

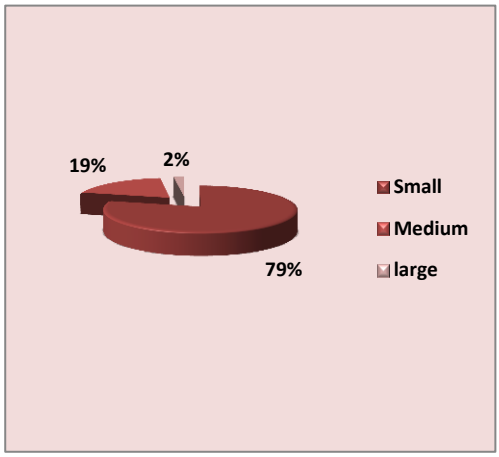

Fig1.6 : Distribution of respondents according to their family size

Table 1.8. Distribution of respondents according to their Mass media ownership and frequency of use

Mass media	Owned %	Other Source (use owned by others) %	Frequency of use			
			Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Radio	3	97	3	-	-	97
Television	34	66	34	-	16	50
News paper	11	89	-	-	30	70
Magazines	11	89	-	-	28	72
Others (Journals, leaflets, booklets etc.)	8	92	-	-	22	78

Table 1.8. indicates that 34 per cent of the respondents have television at their own followed by 11 per cent each in newspaper and magazines, 8 percent in others (Journals, leaflets, booklets etc.) and only 3 per cent in radio whereas 97 per cent of the respondents does not have radio at their own followed by 92 per cent in others (Journals, leaflets, booklets etc.), 89 per cent each in newspaper and magazines and 66 per cent in television. The frequency of use of television was more in number than other mass media.

2.1 Availability and accessibility to ICT

Table 2.1.1. Distribution of respondents according to availability and accessibility to different ICTs hardware

ICTs hardware	Availability		Extent of Access		
			Complete	Partial	No access
	Yes	No			
Television	34	66	34	-	65
Radio	3	97	3	-	97
Mobile	81	19	81	-	19
Kiosk / common service centers	-	100	-	-	100
Computer	-	100	-	-	100
CD/DVD	-	100	-	-	100
Internet	2	98	2	-	98
e- mail	-	100	-	-	100

From Table 2.1.1. It is clearly indicates that 81 per cent of the respondents have use mobile phones followed by television (34%), radio (3%), and internet (2%) whereas they have complete access to mobile compare to television and radio.

Table 2.1.2. Distribution of respondents according to frequency of use of different ICT tools

ICT tools	Frequency of usage			
	Always	**Sometimes**	**Rarely**	**Never**
Television	34	-	-	64
Radio	3	-	-	97
Mobile	81	-	-	19
Kiosk / common service centers	-	-	-	100
Computer	-	-	-	100
CD/VDV	-	-	-	100
Internet	2	-	-	98
e- mail	-	-	-	100

From Table 2.1.2. It is clearly indicates that 81 respondents use mobile everyday while 2 respondents use internet every day. Whereas 34 respondents watch television and 3 respondents listen to radio on daily basis. While respondents they do not access or use kiosk/common service centres, computer, DVD/CD and e-mail because it was not available in their respective areas.

Table 2.1.3. Distribution of respondents according to their purpose for using ICTs

ICT tools	Education		Health		Business		Agriculture		Social welfare		Entertainment		Any other	
	F	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**
Television	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4	30	30
Radio	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	1	1
Mobile	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	12	-	-	69	69
Kiosk / common service centers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Computer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CD/VDV	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Internet	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
e- mail	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

From Table 2.1.3. It is clearly indicates that 69 per cent of the respondents use mobile to stay connected with their relatives and for other purposes while 12 per cent of the respondents use mobile for social welfare. Whereas 30 percent watch television for other purposes rather than business, entertainment and so on while few respondents (4%) watch television for entertainment purposes. Probably only 2 percent use internet for other purposes.

Table 2.1.4. Distribution of respondents according to their training undergone related to ICT and their duration

SI. No	ICTs	Participation				Duration *									
		Yes		No		1-3 days		4 days to 1 week		15 days		1 month		More than 1 month	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Mobile phones	-	-	100	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2.	Basics of Computer	-	-	100	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3.	Use of Internet	-	-	100	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Any other	-	-	100	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

* percentage will be calculated based on the number of respondents participation in training

From Table 2.1.4. It is clearly indicates that entire respondents have not undergone the training which was related to ICT.

3.1 Use of ICT in agriculture and allied areas

Table 3.1.1. Percent distribution of respondents according to their problems associated with use of ICTs

Statements	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
ICT Services are unaffordable	83	83	17	17
Poor network connectivity	96	96	4	4
Lack of awareness about ICTs	100	100	-	-
Erratic power supply	100	100	-	-
Lack of knowledge on operating ICTs	100	100	-	-
Lack of training on use of ICTs	100	100	-	-
Lack of repairing centres in the area	100	100	-	-
High cost for repairing ICTs	100	100	-	-
Technical illiteracy (Computer)	100	100	-	-
Language problem	100	100	-	-
Cultural taboos	-	-	100	100
ICT services(Kiosks/Internet Cafe) are faraway	100	100	-	-
High cost of net packs	87	87	13	13
Any other	-	-	-	-

From Table 3.1.1. It is clearly indicates that 100 per cent of the respondents have problems related to lack of awareness about ICTs, erratic power supply, lack of knowledge on operating ICTs, lack of training on use of ICTs, lack of repairing centre's in the area, high cost of repairing ICTs technically illiteracy, language problem and ICT services are far away while 87 per cent of the respondents have a problem with high cost of net packs. Whereas there was no problem related to cultural taboos.

CONCLUSION

From the study it was found that large percentage of the respondents have used other sources of ICTs hardware except that availability of mobile phones was more in number than other source of ICTs hardware. So far there access to different ICTs hardware was unknown to them except mobile phones. Most probably they are not aware for their better livelihood. The problems related to used and access ICTs hardware is due to financial

problems, lack of training, lack of knowledge and so on. It is envious to know that that they have not undergone any training or awareness programmes regarding ICTs hardware.

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