

Social Process and Gender in Information Society



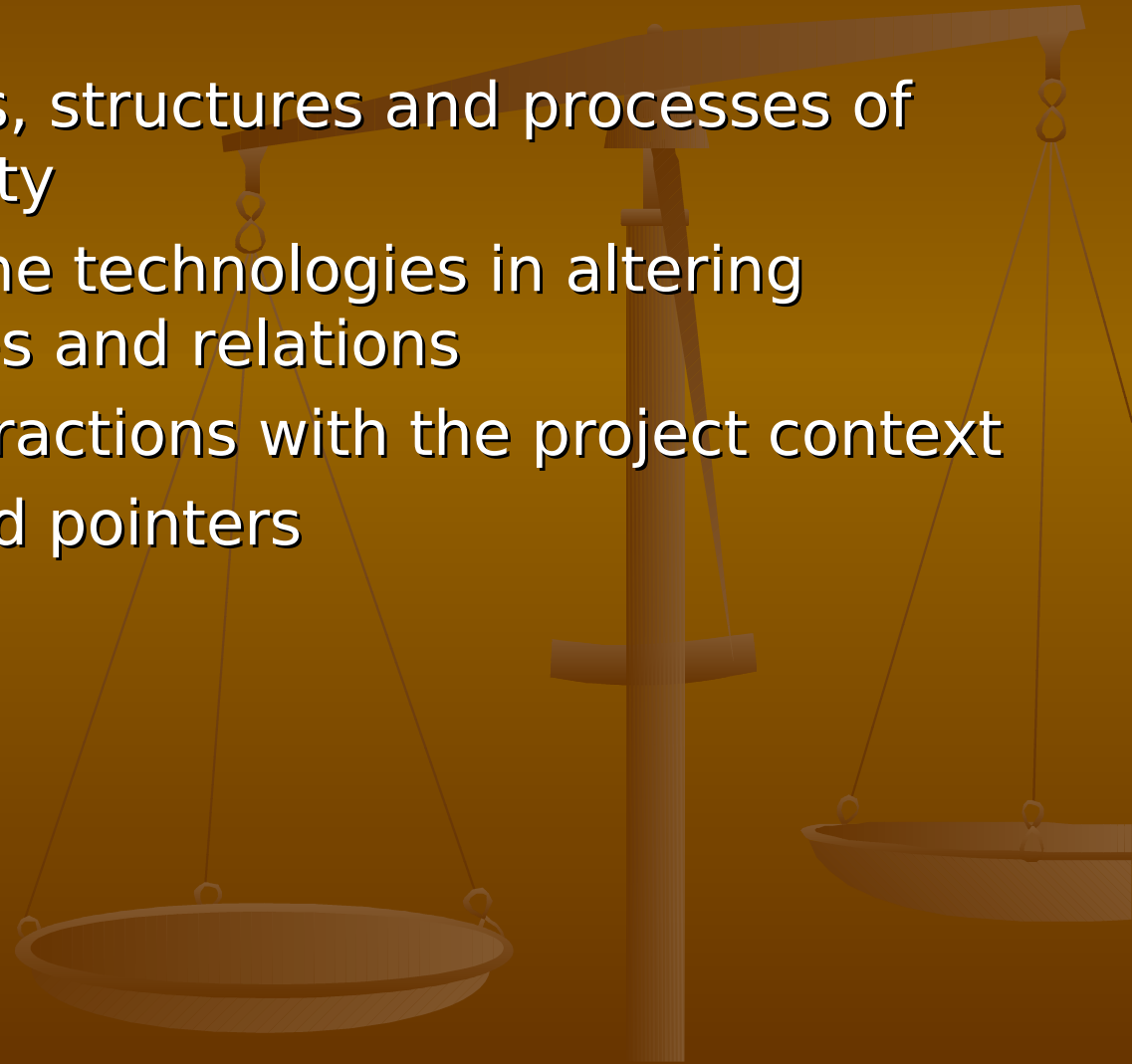
ITfC & Luella College of Technology Workshop
February 3-4, 2007

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Situating Gender in Community Informatics

Examine :

- Pre-project patterns, structures and processes of ICT in the community
- Characteristics of the technologies in altering specific gender roles and relations
- Larger ecology interactions with the project context
- Specific insights and pointers



Background



- COL-CEMCA mandate
“Learning for Development”
- ODL methods
- Promote technology (contextually relevant)
- Work through partners ,promoting multi-stake holders approach
- Technical support to add value to partners (not a funding agency)

CEMCA-COL Initiatives

- COLLIT
 - Brought together three fields of activity: development, ICT and adult literacy undertaken in India and Zambia, July 1999-2002 . 8 learning centres established with two SRSc in Rajasthan and M.P. and MSSRF in Tamil Nadu
- FRCH
 - Capacity building of CHW in audio/video content development
- ITfC, MSK
 - Audio content development
- eHomemakers, Malaysia
 - Multimedia training resource on setting up home business
- Interactions with women at telecentres :Seelampur and Addakal
- DNet,Bangladesh
 - Audio/video content development by Infomediaries
- Others
 - AIF-DE
 - Capacity building for social workers of MMK, Gujarat

Pre-project structures

- By and large, little or limited use of ICT
- FRCH was using “sympmed”, a computer based diagnostic tool. HW, independent of their formal education, had a high level of domain knowledge.
- COLLIT - no ICTs were being used in the project areas
- eHomemakers-very tech savvy-net based organisation
- ITfC -begun using variety of ICTs recently
- AIF-DE ICT introduced through programme
- MMK -no ICT use

The Access Hype



- Improved access does not guarantee effective use. Inadequate content poses a greater barrier to appropriation of technology
 - e.g. telecentres
 - COLLIT- utilization depended on partners
 - FRCH high utilization
 - ITFC high utilization
- In each case, the social animator or the development agency played the crucial role in making the technology “accessible” to women

Impact On Gender Roles And Relations



The good

Gained confidence. Respect in family and community. Learnt new skills. Improved occupations

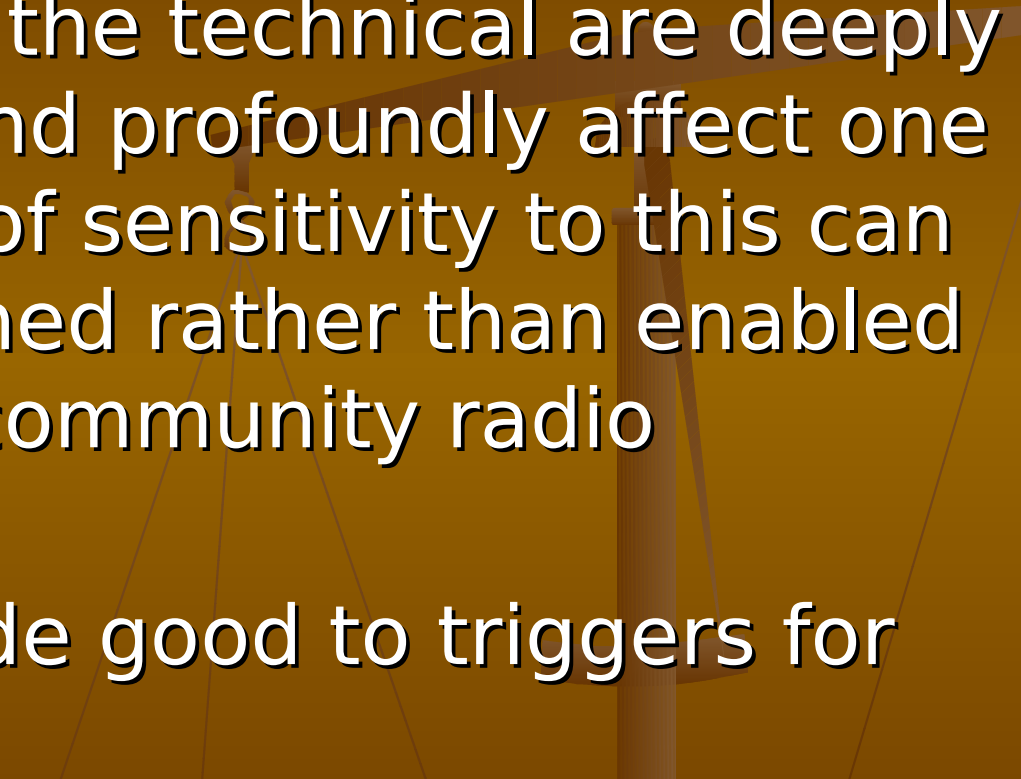
The bad

Negative impacts. Ridiculed in community and family. Stopped from going to telecentres. Internet connections disconnected

And the Ugly

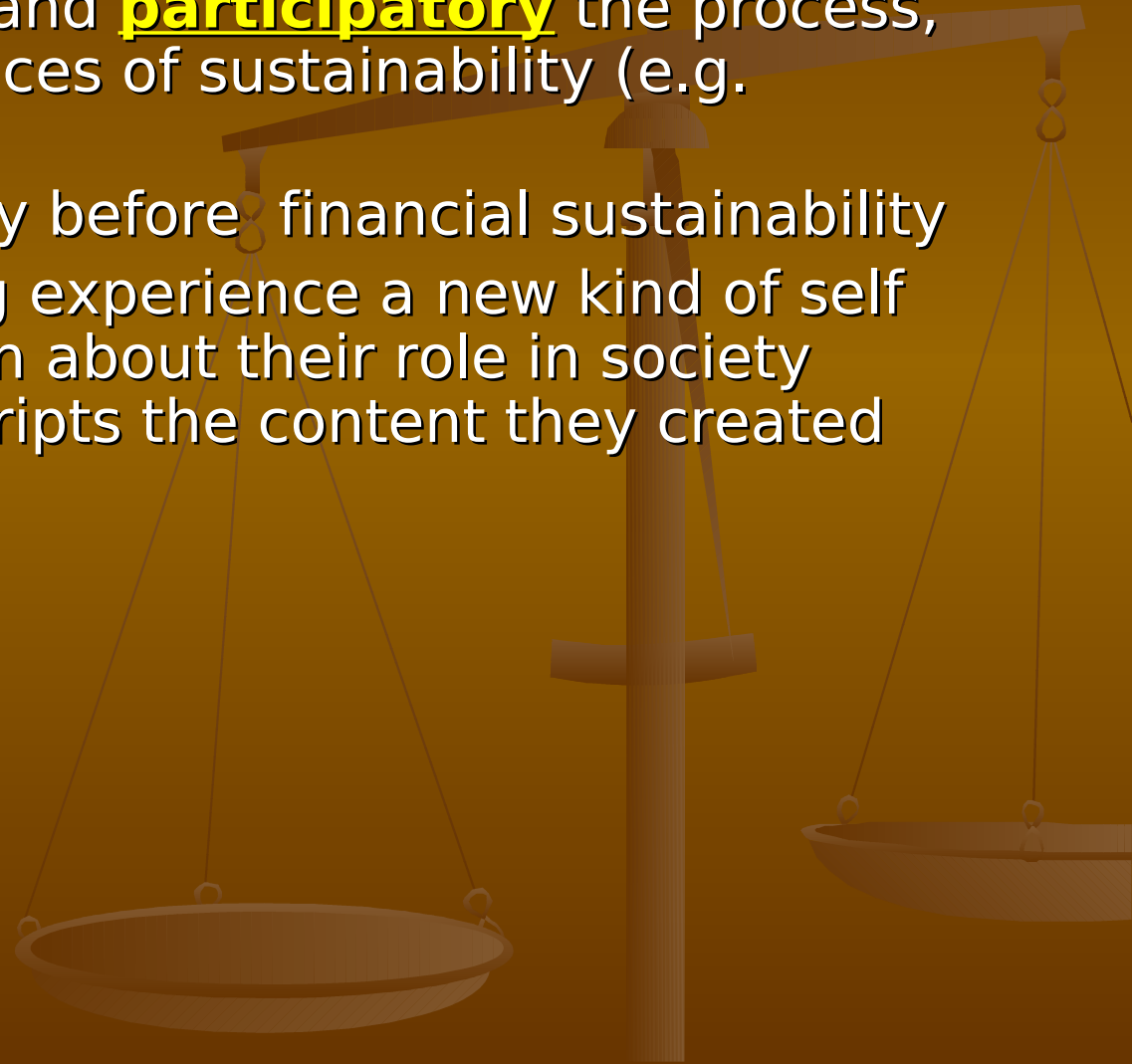
- Extreme harassment. Physical and psychological abuse

The Big Picture

- The social and the technical are deeply inter-related and profoundly affect one another. Lack of sensitivity to this can lead to restrained rather than enabled social action (community radio productions)
 - ICTs can provide good to triggers for social change
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Reflections

- More contextualised and **participatory** the process, greater are the chances of sustainability (e.g. Parinchey)
- Process sustainability before financial sustainability
- Women participating experience a new kind of self worth and perception about their role in society (evidenced in the scripts the content they created ,FRCH)



Thank you

