

# Social Process and Gender in Information Society

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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

# Reflections

- More contextualised and **participatory** the process, greater are the chances of sustainability (e.g. Parinchev)
- 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

