



Ministerial Roundtable: Advancing Women's Digital Opportunities

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10:00 - 11:30, Room XVII

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Talking points during the session **Advancing Women's Digital Opportunities**

On policy recommendation, it was mentioned that one policy for all will not work for advancing women's digital opportunities. Reason being, a large population of women who are literate, use digital devices and the internet, are primarily using it for socializing and not for eCommerce. On the other hand, a large segment of women population is not literate at all and obviously cannot use ICT. Additionally, there is a segment of women who is literate but do not use digital devices for going online. Therefore, it is required to divide women into different groups / clusters keeping in view their capacity and probability of getting into digital economy and make policies accordingly.

4As Approach for bridging the gender digital divide was suggested consisting of following components:

Access to ICT services: Provision of affordable access to women which is basic pre-requisite for the increased use of internet technologies. In particular, rural women are excluded from access to ICT services and facilities. Therefore, it is necessary to have dis-aggregated data on how many women have access to affordable infrastructure to go online. Thereafter, policy measures would be required to increase the access for women.

Awareness about opportunities provided by digital world: Awareness to digital technologies, provision of the necessary skills to use internet technologies and what they can do with the use of internet technologies is need of the to increase the use of internet technologies and bridge the gender digital divide gap. The awareness needs to be enhanced with respect to opportunities & benefits that women as individuals and entrepreneurs can obtain by using ICT.

Aptitude to harness such opportunities: Even in present times, it's mainly the parents or the family who are to decide and choose educational field or career of girls. Girls are often not given freedom, due to cultural values, to make their own choices for selecting the profession and area of study in a number of the developing and least developed countries. This aptitude needs revision, and to start with major paradigm: to first train and realize the immediate family and then teachers for being open and to show openness towards girls. This is to say, the family and then the society is to believe that girls are equally capable and eligible to adopt ICT as a field of study and then as a career.

Application of ICT across the activities: Development of applications and relevant content which create awareness to the digital

technologies should be available in the local languages. Language is a big hurdle as most of the applications etc are not in native language.

Researchers have found that ICT access through mobile phones is easier way for the women to go online and avail the ICT facilities, as compared with the use of computers and other digital devices. However, internet access through mobile phones is typically more expensive than the broadband internet. By provision of mobile internet on affordable rates, and development of smart phone supportive contents, the gender digital divide can be narrowed down. Hence, Development of Gender Responsive Strategies and Policies is the solution leading to including more and more women into digital economy.

The bottom-line is: Women Entrepreneur Development should be made part of “National Policy Priority”