Investigating gender associated pattern in ICT Access and Usage in Ethiopia

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BACKGROUND / INTRODUCTION

- Ethiopia has about 80 million population.
- Population predominantly rural, over 80%
- Patriarchal society-
  - long established gender roles and relationships, favoring men & dictating everyday life, adhered more in rural areas
- Despite positive legislative, policy and program government initiatives, gender equality is far from being realized
- Ethiopia ranked 72nd (/93) according to a UNDP Gender Empowerment Measure (focuses on women’s and men’s capacities to engage actively in economic and political sphere.)
Ethiopia has one of the least penetration of ICT and usage including fixed phone, mobile phone, internet, and computer.

Many attribute this dismal situation to the state of ownership and market structure of the ICT sector, which is under the monopoly of a public operator, the Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation.

Existing studies are mostly dwell on the significance of adoption and diffusion of ICT to bring about development, and often offer technical explanation to address barriers.

There is a dearth of research that explore the interplay between ICT and gender in Ethiopia.
The study attempts to illuminate the embeddeness of ICT in the social context, by exploring relationship between gender and ICT access & use

Purpose- to further understanding on how gender mediates access and usage of ICT in Ethiopia.

- To identify the variance in adoption and usage pattern of ICT among men and women in Ethiopia
- To gain insight on issues that influence decisions of men and women in adopting specific ICT
- To examine factors that account for differences in usage patterns of different ICT between men and women
Method

Mixed method

- Quantitative RIA data – 2355 HHs
- Qualitative data – 6 FGDs

Data Analysis

- Basic statistics – Percentage, chi square, thematic analysis
FINDINGS

Radio

- Most widespread, but still over a third of respondents don’t control/own one.
- Only ICT accessible in most rural parts, but financially prohibitive for many to own or use regularly, cost of batteries.

"I am a widow. I am responsible for the education of my young children. I don’t have the capacity to buy a radio," said a rural woman.
Another rural man added, “We buy batteries with whatever money we’ve got. Many people don’t afford the battery expense and we just lock the radio away.”

It was reported that in rural areas household heads and older boys have more control over radio

“I have a radio. I listen to useful programs. But it is my husband who listens to the radio most. He listens to programs in local and foreign languages. I like to listen to different programs but as I am very busy with different work at home, I don’t listen much,” said a participant from the focus group with female rural group.

“There is only one radio in the house and if everyone wants to listen, boys get priority on choice of programs. The girls may have as much interest to listen to the radio as the boys but the boys have a sense of ownership to the radio,” said a participant from the focus group with male rural group.
TELEVISION

- No difference in usage, but about half respondents don’t watch TV, with more women expressing disinterest to do so.

“There is no TV in this area. It is only found in the town. When we go the town, we watch TV while having a drink,” said a participant from the focus group with rural male group.

A participant from the FGD with rural female group said, “The men use whatever they earn to watch soccer on TV while having bread or tea. But if we (women) have 50 cents, we spend it on buying goods such as onion or salt for the household. We are concerned about our household problems.”

“Only older boys and men can watch TV in town and return late. This is not something for the old or the women,” said another participant from the focus group with rural male group.
Where?

- Women more likely to watch at their or others’ home, in the company of others
- Men are more likely to watch TV at public places

It is not common for a woman to watch TV in public places. The atmosphere is not friendly. Besides, the only program one cannot follow at home is soccer. I don’t think women are interested in soccer,” said a participant from the middle-high income female group.

“I have a son. He watches soccer outside. The rest of the family (the mother and two daughters) watches TV at home. I bought a TV so that my kids will not leave home. I don’t allow my daughters to leave home to watch TV because the situation out there is very bad. I don’t mind if the boy wants to watch TV outside the house,” said a participant from the low income female group.
PUBLIC PAY PHONE USAGE

- Less than a quarter used Public phone, no difference between sexes
- Gender equality- accessibility & affordability for all
  "I think female domestic workers tend to use public pay phones more because they are not allowed to use the fixed phone at home," said a participant from the FGD with low income male group.

“Women do not earn as much as men. She depends on what she gets from the man and from other sources. It is not even adequate. That is why I think women use public pay phones more,” said a participant from the FGD with middle-high income female group.

- There are reports of harassment & safety concern to use at night
INTERNET

- Knowledge & use of internet very low

  "I have never thought about using the internet. I don’t have the interest and don’t know how to use it," said a participant from the middle-high income male group.

  "I have never used it. When I hear about it, I think it is complicated. I have no idea how to use it," said a participant from the low income female group.

- Women are less likely to know and use the internet

- Access point: internet cafes & educational institutions, with no difference between men and women

A female participant from the FGD with middle-high income group explained "I used to find using the internet at cybercafés intimidating. Besides, using internet at cybercafé used to scare me as a woman. When I get used to it, I realized that there is nothing to it. What makes women not to use cybercafés are not just the men there but the sentiment 'what would people think of me?'"
MOBILE PHONE

- Only 16% claim to have mobile/SIM, with cost of SIM & handset reported as prohibitive
- Women less likely to own
- Women less likely to buy their own mobile/SIM
- Women more likely to get mobile/SIM from significant others
- Women less likely to cover call expense
- Women less likely to use mobile for business purpose
CONCLUSION

- Economic constrain, and women empowerment
  - Economic empowerment of women to improve access and use of ICTs.
  - Expansion of investment in ICT infrastructure in underserved areas

- Computer literacy & production of locally relevant content
  - Training to promote and ensure equal inclusion and involvement of women.

- Cultural and social barriers, promotion of gender equality
  - to create and foster convenient environment for women, which might include enforcing laws and sensitizing the public against discriminatory practices against women.
different categories within women in terms of ICT access and use
- low income vs. middle-high income
- urban vs. rural
- employed vs. unemployed
- educated vs. non-educated

in all cases the former group faring well.
THANK YOU!