Can Mobile Learning Empower Women and Girls?

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27 February 2015
Mobile technology in the village: ICTs, culture, and social logistics in India

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Mobile technology is currently emerging as the first extensive form of electronic communication system in many regions of Africa and Asia. This article analyses the appropriation of mobile phones in rural India by exploring what new social alternatives mobile phones enable and how these new social constellations relate to culture and cultural change. The ethnographic description relates phone usage to other communication patterns and ongoing processes of transformation. The article draws from the local cultural and social context, but also connects with other places and conditions.
## Study among Women Goat Herders

### Who Keeps the Phone most of the time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who Keeps the Phone</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>75.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Do you Carry mobile phone while grazing the goat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you Carry mobile phone</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>90.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Number of messages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of messages</th>
<th>% of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>39.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 or more</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Number of calls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of calls</th>
<th>% made calls to discuss Goat enterprise</th>
<th>% received calls about Goat enterprise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>61.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 or more</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mobile Phones

- Can help non-formal learning reach semi-literate & illiterate women
- Can reduce drudgery and the opportunity costs of learning among women
- Can strengthen the cognitive social capital among women
L3F Initiative in India

Survey:

510 women randomly selected:
- women involved in L3F
- women not involved in L3F

Result:

Learning through mobile and other ICT media along with strong social capital can act as important determining variables in strengthening empowerment.

EMPOWERMENT: “The expansion in people’s ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them”.... - Naila Kabeer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASPECT</th>
<th>DEGREE</th>
<th>REALM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Desire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Means</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Psychological/ Emotional**
Self-esteem; confidence; self-efficacy; capacity to aspire; subjective wellbeing.

**Social/cultural**
Freedom of movement; education; healthcare; marriage; reproduction, social interactions, group membership.

**Economic**
Income; access to and control of resources.

**Political/Legal**
Legal and political systems, rights and government services; political involvement; exercising rights.
L3F Initiative in Uganda

L3F SURVEY

Comparing:

- L3F Village
- Non-L3F Village

RESULT

Social capital and learning under L3F are the important determining variables in strengthening the empowerment.
Men and women involved in L3F rated mobile phone highly as a tool for learning compared to men and women in non-L3F.

Women of L3F have given higher rating for mobile phone as a learning tool compared to men of non-L3F.
L3F women rate the mobile phone significantly higher than Non-L3F men.
Because L3F Uganda adapts its educational tools to fit farmers’ lifestyles and technological capacities, rather than imposing costly or time-intensive educational programs on farmers, the project can make real advances in empowering farmers and improving their livelihoods.
Ms. Olivia Atieno, Ugunja, Kenya

- School dropout: joined L3F during 2010
- Learns daily through Mobile phone
- Shares her learning through mobile phone with other group members
- Manages her enterprise using mobile phone
- Transacts cooperative activities through mobile phone
- Established Dairy Goat, Orange Flesh Sweet Potato, Maize and became a member and active coordinator of a cooperative
- Enhanced her household income and sends her 3 children to schools and college
Ms. Valarmathy, Theni, India

- Primary school dropout: joined a Self-Help Group and L3F in 2008-2009
- Learns through Mobile phone and other ICT media
- Uses mobile phones for sharing her learning with group members
- Operates electronic gadgets used for bank transactions
- Conducts mobile transactions in her business of goat rearing
- Learnt the intricacies of financial management
- Learnt goat husbandry and started a goat enterprise
- Became a resource person of the community banking process under L3F
- Appointed as Business Correspondent of a major commercial bank
Women’s SACCO

L3F in Tanzania

Ms. Federes Gaso

M Pesa facility in the SACCO
the belief that there is a technological silver bullet that can “solve” illiteracy, ill health or economic failure reflects scant understanding....

(HDR UNDP, 2011:iii)
Our experiences in L3F show that:

- The mobile phone by itself cannot be a silver bullet for development

- Every learner is not automatically empowered

- Innovation is about harnessing such technologies in an appropriate socio-economic and political context for reaching various development goals

- Innovation is facilitating women to domesticate such technologies through appropriation, objectification, incorporation and conversion
Domestication of Technology: Mobile Phones

- **Appropriation** refers to being able to access and own resources;

- **Objectification** reflects the use of resources within the household economy;

- **Incorporation** is the manner in which the objects and resources are integrated and have an impact on the power relations within the household;

- **Conversion** is the relationship between the household and the broader society.

Mobile Learning as a Pathway to Empower Women and Girls - COL’s L3F Model

Social Capital

Mobile Phones for learning and enterprise management

Natural Physical

Empowerment

Livelihood Outcome

Policy Institutions Investments

Financial Capital

Human Capital
THANK YOU

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www.col.org

LONGTITUDINAL STUDY TRACING THE LIFELONG LEARNING FOR FARMERS ACTIVITIES IN TAMIL NADU, INDIA, 2011: