

ICTs to Empower Marginal Women in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

This research documents the existing situation of women including the venerable women started from homeworkers, SME and BPO in Thailand and their use of Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) and its related issues. A total of 100 homeworkers and the general women represented from four regions were interviewed. Most of 100 are the less income group with household monthly incomes ranging between US\$ 200 and US\$500 with around 35 percent among them from vulnerable groups comprised of single mothers, who are either divorced or widowed, and those chronically ill including some who are handicap follow by HIV/AIDS positive. Further insights are gathered from focus group discussions involving 40 participants, and four observation case studies.

The Thai Government has attached importance to the development of the ‘informal economy sector, SME (Small and Medium Enterprise), E-services under the current policy of the Digital Economy and given its recognition. More accountable policy agencies have more involved : Ministry of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Industrial Promotion, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Human Security and Welfare, Ministry of ICT, and Ministry of Labor. Women and girls’ empowerment gained more concreted and continuum policy support especially from the Ministry of the Prime Minister while the Ministry of Labor takes lead in women careers : homeworkers, entrepreneur : SME as well as all kinds of BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) among all women. The Thai homeworkers and SME are roughly divided into 50 types of home-based works and entrepreneurs as well as the BPO. The research focuses on all venerable women especially the women who are breadwinner of the family who work individually from home as a single homeworkers or homepreneurs, entrepreneur, SME, BPO as well as all kinds of women groups.

After losing their jobs during the Asian financial crisis of 1997 many were attracted by the incentives provided by the Government’s various poverty eradication programs and entered home-based and SME works. A third of the 100 homeworkers interviewed are between the ages of 31-40; 27% is 20 -30, and 24% with 41-50 years old. The majority (76%) are married with children and significant number have husband’s who are working away from home, more on domestic than overseas, as migrant workers. With some remittance from husbands, the women bear the main burden of care and maintenance for the family and elderly dependents.

Home-based, SME and BPO works offer them primary or supplementary income. With the ICT promotion under the Digital Economy from Thai government, all women as well as the venerable women awared about the E-services as well as access to phones (mobile then fixed), tablet, radio, television, cable and mobile TV. Social media : Line, Facebook and e-mail are the increasing ones. Efforts and policies are continuously made to increase the affordability of these ICT infrastructure, E-services as well as tools to promote both of their quality of life and entrepreneur development into more e-commerce and upper markets to welcome more to the opening up of ASEAN One Community in 2015.

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Information and Communication Technology (ICT) reform in the 2000s

In the global context, the development of ICT in Thailand can be considered average, when measured against worldwide indices such as the “Networked Readiness Ranking” and “e-Readiness Ranking” indices. However, when Thailand is compared to other countries in Asia, especially with neighboring countries such as Singapore and Malaysia, it turns out that they are more developed than Thailand in all the indices. The main factor holding back the development of ICT in Thailand in all indices is the readiness of the information and communication infrastructure, which is still insufficient and has limited coverage. This constrains the development and use of ICT, which is still inefficient and ineffective, in building up knowledge, developing enterprises and serving the government. Thus, the development of ICT infrastructure is an important issue that the ICT Master Plan must resolve.

But as the latest information on Thailand ICT Q2 2013, compiled by IMC Institute; September 2013 mentioned that the Top 4 social media that Thais use as shown in Figure 4. The most popular is Facebook with 18.5 Million users which can be compared with the former information, it shown in Figure 3 that in 2010 the Facebook user in Thailand was 10.6 million. The second is Line Application on mobile phone with 18 million users. The third is Twitter with 2 million users and the forth is YouTube with 5.3 million Videos.

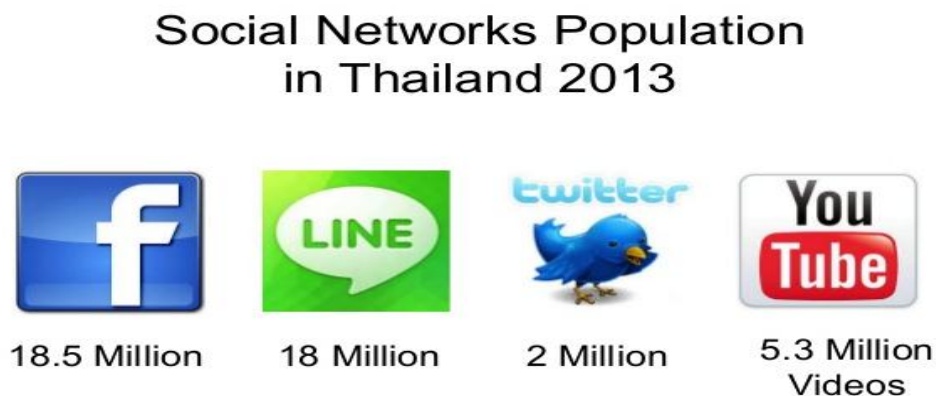


Figure 2. Social Networks Population in Thailand 2013.

<http://www.slideshare.net/imcinstitute/thailand-ict-overview-q2-2013>

The Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) which has established since 2002 with its mission to take a lead in driving ICT to serve all development of the country. The Ministry of ICT has integrated itself with the National Economic and Social Development Plan as well as other policies from all agencies to move Thailand towards a knowledge-based society and economy. Although differing in mission

and responsibilities , all agencies share the same direction in using ICT as a common policy as follows:

- Human resource development, as people are the foundation for national development.
- Economic and industrial development, emphasizing strategic industries (agriculture, manufacturing and services).
- Social and community development that allows for participatory approaches to local development and management, including the revival and transmission of Thai cultural diversity, such as way of life, customs, values and local wisdom.
- Building of a stable natural resource base, by focusing on addressing environmental problems, including natural disaster warning.
- Improvement of governance, by emphasizing transparency in the public and private sector and allowing the people to participate in the social and economic development process.
- Infrastructure development and the establishment of specialized agencies and institutions to mobilize development.

Table 1 : General Information of Thailand and Thai Women

Indicator	Thailand
Basic Information	Data
1. Country name	Thailand
2. Area (km ²)	510,890.0
3. National population	67,010,502
4. Rural population	43,643,136
5. Key Economic Sector(s)	Tourism, Service Industry, Agriculture, Garment Industry, Electrical and Electronics Industry, Automotive Industry, Alternative Energy Industry,
6. Industry (%)	39.2%
6-1. Agriculture (%)	8.4%
6-2. Fisheries (%)	-
6-3. Livestock industry (%)	3.2%
6-4. Other sectors (%)	-
7. GDP per capita	5,779 USD
8. Employment (%)	72%
8-1. Employment - Urban (%)	-
8-2. Employment - Rural (%)	-
Gender	
1. Education (% of female)	
1-1. Primary education (% of female)	90%
1-2. Secondary education (% of female)	87%

1-3. Higher education (% of female)	54.28%
2. Literacy (% of female)	97%
3. Labor Force Participation (% of female)	64%
3-1. Labor force in agriculture (% of female)	38%
3-2. Labor force in fisheries (% of female)	-
3-3. Labor force in livestock industry (% of female)	-
3-4. Labor force in other sector (% of female)	Industry: 18%; Services: 44%
ICT	
1. Telephone lines (%)	45%
1-1. Telephone lines - Urban (%)	33%
1-2. Telephone lines - Rural (%)	12%
2. Cell phone subscriptions (%)	With 95 million numbers by the end of 2013 (by NBTC 2014)
2-1. Cell phone subscriptions - Urban (%)	Nearly 100%
2-2. Cell phone subscriptions - Rural (%)	Around 70%
3. Internet use (%)	Around 70% (affected by the mobile phone internet)
3-1. Internet use - Urban (%)	Around 45%
3-2. Internet use - Rural (%)	Around 25%
3-3. Internet use - Women (%)	Around 15 % (via mobile phone, internet-cafe, and telecentre)
4. Households with internet access	Around 40%
4-1. Households with internet access - Urban (%)	Around 25%
4-2. Households with internet access - Rural (%)	Around 15%
5. Telecenter	
5-1. The number of telecenters - Urban	300 telecentres (under the Ministry of ICT only)
5-2. The number of telecenters - Rural	1,700 telecentres (under the Ministry of ICT only)
6. Online Social Networks	
6.1 Facebook	28 Million accounts (the 9 th global rank)) by Zocial Inc. 2014 and Telecom Journal
6.2 Line	24 Million accounts by Zocial Inc. 2014 and Telecom Journal
6.3 Twitter	4.5 Million accounts by Zocial Inc. 2014 and Telecom Journal
6.4 Instagram	1.7 Million accounts by Zocial Inc. 2014 and Telecom Journal

Cited from Kamolrat Intaratat, 2014-2015. Asia Pacific Women's Information Network Center, Sookmyung Women's University, Korea

ICT Policy Scenario :

The Ministry of ICT in collaboration with the National Electronics and Computer Technology Center (NECTEC) has developed the National Information and Communications Technology Master as follow;

The First Master Plan (2002-2006), formulated under the framework of National IT Policy 2001-2010 (IT2010) is the nation's blueprint to exploit the benefit of technology for national development. The Thailand Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy Framework (2001-2010) or IT2010 has guided the development of Thailand's ICT in the first decade of the 21st century until the present. IT2010 flagships, the "5 e's strategy",

emphasize the development and application of ICTs in five strategic areas, namely, e-Government, e-Industry, e-Commerce, e-Education and e-Society, aiming to enhance the economy and quality of life of the Thai people and lead Thailand towards a knowledge-based economy and society. The ICT Policy Framework IT2010 set the long-term policy direction at the macro level. The IT2010 policy framework identified three main goals, as follows:

- Raise Thailand's ranking in the Technology Achievement Index (TAI), moving from its ranking in the group of "dynamic adopters" to the group of countries identified as "potential leaders".
- Develop Thai knowledge workers to account for a total of 30 percent of the workforce by 2010.
- Develop Thai industry towards knowledge-based industry by setting a target for the value of industries which are knowledge-based at 50 percent of GDP.

The Second Master Plan (2002-2006) formulated with a view to ensuring continuity at the policy level, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) has developed the ICT2020 Policy Framework for the next 10 years (2011-2020). The important inputs the previous policy framework and the current status as well as limitation of ICT development of the country has been integrated with overall development direction of the country along with all kinds of challenges during the 10-year span of the policy framework. Furthermore, the development of the policy framework has also considered the technological changes. The development of the content of this policy framework is founded on the following principles:

- Use the key concept of sustainable development which has to consider balanced development in three dimensions, namely, the social dimension, the economic dimension, and the environmental dimension. Furthermore, both quantity and quality of development should be considered, along with social justice, in order to ensure sustainable and stable development.
- Use ICT in reducing inequality and providing opportunities for people to benefit from development in an equitable manner.
- Adhere to the "sufficiency economy" philosophy, that is, to focus on economic development that allows the country to keep up with modern times, while, at the same time, being mindful of sufficiency and moderation that is commensurate with national capacity, reasonable and has immunity from internal and external changes.

- Ensure linkage and continuity in policy and strategy with previous policy frameworks and master plans, in order to sustain momentum.
- It is assumed that public sector financing by itself will not be adequate, therefore, the private sector involvement is highly desirable.

ICT Policy Reform in 2000s

National Broadband Policy for National Development

According to Article 78 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2550 (2007) that calls for the state to undertake public administration in order to develop the society, economy and security of the country in a sustainable manner, it also includes the creation and provision of public services, public utilities, and comprehensive local information infrastructure that is equal throughout the country. Consequently, the Communication Technology Policy Framework (2011-2020) or ICT 2020 was promulgated in order to serve as the framework for developing ICT until all citizens can access universally, with world-class quality and security standards by the year 2020.

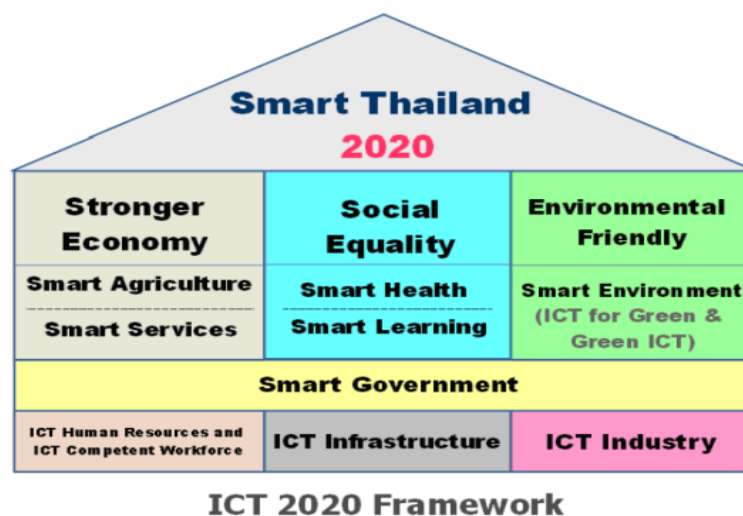


Fig 4 Ministry of Information Communication and Technology (ICT), Thailand 2013

The government has established the National Broadband Policy in order to ensure clarity and to serve as a framework for implementing and driving the development of broadband service which will make use of diverse technologies, be advanced and up-to-date, and in tune with the context and situation of Thailand. The main objective of National Broadband Policy is overall to develop the broadband network and allow all people can access equally by 2020.

By the collaboration of relevant organizations, National Broadband Policy will be promoted and realized through mass media, government agencies, non-government organizations and community-based organizations in order to raise the social awareness on

the policy; especially, in the rural and remote communities. The ICT Community Learning Centre or the Thai Telecentre will be used as one among the outlet to deliver all broadband facilities to reach all rural communities. The expected outcome of National Broadband Policy is that the country can decrease cost of overall broadband service delivery while all Thai people especially the underserved groups can gain more advantages on information accessibility and information literacy, no matter where they are.

E-Development

Thailand is aiming to achieve the same benefits of ICT. However, there are a number of issues that are potentially problematic for Thailand and cause the digital divide between urban and rural areas. First, basic telephone services, are indisputably a pre-condition for wide access to the Internet, Thailand is facing a paramount barrier of its still under 20% telephone penetration rates. Moreover, the figure is substantially lower in the rural areas, presenting a severe obstacle in expansion of Internet access to rural schools and communities. Thailand Telecom Affordability has 6.5 million telephones with 62 million people throughout Thailand, therefore it is affordable to about 10% of people (NECTEC, 2002: 24). Second, pricing remains a major barrier in Internet expansion in Thailand at both individual and corporate level. For instance, an average monthly fee for the most basic Internet access for individual costs at least 600 baht (Busakorn, 1996).

The National Electronics and Computer Technology Center (NECTEC) is a statutory government organization under the National Science and Technology Development Agency in the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment. The organization is the secretariat for the National IT Committee (NITC) and plays an important role to cooperate with many organizations and both public and private sectors in implementing projects to apply ICT for poverty reduction in the country. Most of NECTEC's projects are involved with the ICT application for community development such as SchoolNet Thailand, Agricultural Information Network, Community access telecentres, Data warehouse project for community products, and the development of rural telephone services (NECTEC, 2002:3).

Some relevant examples of e-development projects as follow:

E-commerce

E-commerce is an integral driver of the development of industrial and trade competitiveness and classified as an urgent national economic development strategy in the 2002-2006 ICT Master Plan. However, there is little progress in on-line purchasing

among the Thai companies. The reasons may be a lack of confidence in the quality guarantee of the products and distrust the credit-card information (NECTEC, 2003: 15). CCDKM (the Research Communication and Development Knowledge Management Center :

www.ccdkm.org) also pilot and keep developing in promoting the community e-commerce since 2000 till currently. Some of its examples are as linked.

<http://www.thaitelecentrecharms.com/> , <http://www.newmedia4d.com/>,

<http://www.thaitelecentretrour.com/>

E-Center (Telecenters)

Most Telecentres are pilot projects to promote the ICT in Thailand and reduce digital divide in communities since 2007 by the Ministry of ICT with other partners and stakeholders, CCDKM is one among all those. Telecentres typically offer public access to computers and other communication technologies and also provide computer training to supply certain business services. Moreover, the telecentres encourage public access to the Internet. Telecentres in Thailand also provide technological resources and services together with training programs. Most organizations have funded the establishment of the telecentres and hire local officers to operate the telecentres in their communities during one year. The organizations also set model of telecentres to meet the needs of the community.

Updating e-Society & e-Government Services with the Marginal Women in Thailand under the context of ASEAN

The e-ASEAN initiative was launched at the 3rd ASEAN Informal Summit in Manila in November 1999 to facilitate the growth of e-commerce in ASEAN, to establish a free-trade area in ICT products, services and investments, to develop an e-society in ASEAN, and promote e-Government services.

On 4 July 2000, the government of Thailand addressed its attention on the e-ASEAN initiative and ordered the National IT Committee (NITC) to work on creating an *e-Thailand* as part of the national development agenda. The vision for e-Thailand is to exploit the potential of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to strengthen the country's economic competitiveness, reduce poverty, and achieve sustainable development (NITC, 2002).

Women and homeworking and home-based production have long been practiced in Thai society. In 1999, for the very first time, the government of Thailand provided formal support for setting up a registration system for disadvantaged and marginalized women under the category of "Homeworkers" (HWs). Homeworkers or work-base workers are mostly

women base which are mostly the group of small homeworkers or the poor homeworkers who are mostly working at home after finishing all her household works, or farm works. Many of these homeworkers are also need to taking care some of the dependent family members i.e. the babies, the elderly parents, the handicap children or even the relatives, etc.

There are around 311,790 homeworkers in Thailand with its increasing numbers. Their average age is between 20-49 years old, mostly married and with an average monthly income of 5,000 Thai Baht. About their quality of life i.e. their accommodations, the women who live in Bangkok are mostly the migrant from the rural areas with her husband and children, so they usually rent rooms, apartments, houses or shared houses; while those who live in their hometowns or in rural areas stay with their extended families or have their own houses. Homework or home base works in Thailand covers a wide range of small or home-base industries: ready-made garment and clothing industry, jewelry cutting, wood and paper making, artificial flower making, food, beverage and tobacco processing, leather products making, glass and ceramic industry, furniture making, recycling industry, and others.

Thai homeworkers can be classified into four main groups: 1) individual household production / the family-base production, 2) group homeworkers/ the vocational groups, 3) the freelancers and 4) the Small Medium Enterprise (SME). Homeworkers or home-base workers in Thailand are under the category of “**informal sector**” which has been ignored from the government for long till under the government of Taksin Chainawatra who has initiated the OTOP policy to help all the marginal groups in Thailand since 1997. “One Tambon (sub-district) One Product” (OTOP) has been kicked off concretely by the government, aims to support Thai rural communities in the production and marketing of locally made products in each tambon/ village in Thailand. The aim of this initiative is to preserve Thai indigenous knowledge, skills, craftsmanship and heritage, which has been passed on for centuries from one generation to the other.

OTOP : the One Tambon One Product Policy has been initiated to help all kinds of homeworkers / home-base workers strengthening. Financial loans, Micro-finance supports, as well as some kinds of fundamental welfares have been initiated to help all women homeworkers. Homeworkers’ main welfares from the government are as followed : 1) the 30 THB Public Health Campaign, 2) the SME Loan, 3) the Vocational Micro-Finance Loan, 4)

the Elderly Citizen monthly support, 5) the handicapped monthly support. And the most update is the Women Empowerment Fund by the previous government Yingluck Chinawatra.

The ICT that homeworkers most commonly use to engage in e-service activities are: mobile phones, tablet, community radios, community towers, cable TV, and telecentre or the ICT Community Learning Centre. However, there are obstacles to the use of ICT, accordingly the costs of internet, the accessibility to the internet, the illiteracy, the high costs of ICT capacity building trainings, English illiteracy, and lack of awareness of the potential of ICTs for their own development.

However, with the increasing and opening of more positive scenario i.e. more friendly ICT, more accessible and affordable ICT, new regional and international markets, Thai homeworkers, women homeworkers have understood the importance of ICT for their life-long and self- learning i.e. the new commerce and trading skills, marketing strategies, and all kinds of new ideas or creative knowledge and skills, etc.

“I learnt how to create a Fan page on Facebook; I will use this space to sell my own products, my family’s products online and reach to more people from different countries”, said one of the homeworkers named Ball from Sa Kaeo province.

Current Status of ICT : e-Services Relevant with Women

The Ministry of Information Communication Technology of Thailand (MICT) is the leading agency for all the e-Service initiatives in Thailand. The ETDA (Electronic Transactions Development Agency (Public Organization), the EGA (Electronic Government Agency) Ministry of ICT (MICT). The EGA has kicked off its policy in 2014 : **“e-Government for All”**. The GAC (Government Application Center), the EGA Smart Box to welcome all kinds of e-Cards to access to any kind of government services i.e. the Driving test for license, the tax payment, the I.D. application and process, etc. also has been kicked off to all mobile devices. But all those e-Services are designed for the general people as a whole. There are still none or least e-Services that are targeted exclusively to women as well as the other marginal groups i.e. the handicap, the elderly people, etc. Besides, the NTC (National Telecommunication Commission) : USO (Universal Service Bureau) also try to help more accessibility to all marginal groups along with increasing more telecommunication service area to all over the country. E-Government: e-Services has been set as one of Thailand’s priority policies under its mission of “Smart Thailand”.

More evidences of success stories among the small women homeworkers all over Thailand have keep increasing as example...

Ms. Kalaya, the single mom homeworker in small village, she has the intention to make the textile in her hometown more well-known. "My dream is to build a brand of Lee District that will associate with the community as well."

"The community has their capability to develop their own quality of life by addressing and empowering their own potential; facilitating their working seriously towards the hopes, the dreams and the love of the land. Mostly, it was ignored by using all kinds of appropriate technology and e-services".

"ICT has completely helped the community to improve products advertising and marketing as well as finding some other sources of raw material. Access to ICT gives us the opportunity to gain new knowledge, techniques as well as designs that helps to promote the product, and also gain more new customers".

Table 2 : Some Key Policies Have Been Launched and under Developing:

Goals	Outcomes
EGA, ETDA (MICT)	MICT (Ministry of Information Communication Technology of Thailand) is the leading agency for all e-Government Services to all at its current first phase now.
All government agencies need to have websites.	All government agencies have done their websites at 3-1levels: (Information , Interaction , Interchange Transaction). The next step is to develop all websites to reach the levels of Integration and Intelligence.
All government agencies need to have a Web-board	All government agencies have created their Web-board.
All government agencies have to offer the e-Citizen Portal.	The Thai government has provided www.ecitizen.go.th aimed to support all integrated services to be Single Point Service / Single Window Services.
All policy levels of all government agencies have to have their e-mail account.	All policy levels of all government agencies have their e-mail account.
Develop the ICT One-Stop	Undergoing in offering the "Single Point Service" to all people

Center	
Gov. Data Exchange (GDX)	In 2004, the Government has launched the One Stop Service for Food Industries.
Gov. Contact Center (GCC)	In 2004, the Government has launched the “Government Call-center”. Using <i>Numberpeople</i> are able to access ,1111 all Government services as well as address their complaints.
Citizen Smart Card	In 2004, the Government has integrated its work with the Ministry of Interior
Cyber Inspector	The Cyber Inspector Team has been set up.
Back Office	In 2004, the GFMIS has been set up for all Government’s budget monitoring and control.
e-Procurement	e-Auction system has been launched.
CIO	CIO Association has been set up.

Cited from Kamolrat Intaratat, 2014-2015. Asia Pacific Women’s Information Network Center, Sookmyung Women’s University, Korea

The agencies who are currently in charge of all e-Government : e-Services in Thailand are; the Office of the Electronic Transactions Commission (<http://www.etcommission.go.th/>); the ETDA (Electronic Transactions Development Agency (<http://www.iqnewsclip.com>) (Public Organization); the EGA (Electronic Government Agency) (www.ega.or.th) Ministry of ICT (MICT), and others.

The Survey Results of the 100 Thai Women on the Development and Delivery of Livelihood based e-services for ASEAN Women

From the results of the 100 Thai women surveyed on the Development and Delivery of Livelihood based e-services for ASEAN Women, most respondents acknowledged the importance of e-services for women and girls. 97% of respondents access Internet from their workplace and 52% affirmed to be online most of the day. While 56% of women use Internet for online communication and networking, 44% use Internet for shopping online. Information about e-Services in Thailand is still very dispersed and fragmented. The general women, women homeworkers and members of the non-formal economy who open up e-commerce platforms and Facebook pages to market and sell their local products online often do not reach the national and international visibility they hope to get. For this reason, most women that were part of the survey addressed the need for a more systematic approach to e-services and a greater awareness raising on the e-services available in Thailand. The need for multi-sector collaborations and partnerships at the local, regional and international levels was also

stressed in order to advance through e-services, the interests and needs of different marginal groups in Thailand including women and women homeworkers.

Table 3 : High lights of the survey result :

Thai Women and ICT : e-Services	<u>Personal Information</u>	<u>Internet Usage Behavior</u>	<u>Perception, Understanding, and the E-Services Usages from the Government agencies) e-services)</u>
	<p>1.1 Ages Most average age is 31-40 year with 40.0% followed by 20-30 year with 27.0%, 24.0 % with 41-50 year, and the other is 9.0% with 50 year old.</p> <p>1.2 Average Income 57.0% has average income with 25,001 Baht, followed by 15.0% with 15,001-20,000 Baht, 10.0% with 10,001-15,000 Baht, 8.0% with 20,001-25,000 Baht, and 2.0% with less than 5,000 Baht.</p> <p>1.3 Vocation 39.0% works with private company, 30.0% with government agency, 15.0% with their own business, 7.0% as the student, 5.0% as the house keeper, and 4.0% as the general employee.</p>	<p>2.1 Convenience in Using Internet 97.0% found most convenient in using internet, just only 3.0% not so convenient in using internet.</p> <p>2.2 Places of using internet 71.0% using internet at their workplace, 29.0 % using at home.</p> <p>2.3 Frequency of using internet 52.0 % using internet all day, 24% uses once in a day, and the last one is 2-3 times/week.</p> <p>2.4 The Objectives of using internet 56.0% using internet for online communication i.e. email, chat, line, facebook followed by 44.0% for online shopping and services at the moderate level.</p> <p>2.5 Popular websites 34.0 % found online social media i.e. facebook, line at the top level followed by 29.0% of website about search engine. And 18.0% using the government agencies websites.</p>	<p>3.1 the Satisfaction of those websites 89.0 % found of in using all those websites, 6.0% found like it...</p> <p>3.2 What kinds of e-Service for women development from the government that you want from the government? Found much wanted, and very much wanted accordingly as followed; 1. Being the hub of Women talents/talents/ idols/ success women = 68.0% 2. Being the hub for any ombudsman / any voice / any communication channel = 58.0% And for the type of information / e-services for women development that will be benefited to women development as followed; - News release/ e-Newsletter = 79.05% - for all kinds of daily living i.e.</p>

			agriculture, fishery, animal raising, etc. = 75.0% - being the hub for announcement / any news post = 68.0% - being the hub for all kinds of relevant media : audio/video for women development = 68.0%
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Cited from Kamolrat Intaratat, 2014-2015. Asia Pacific Women's Information Network Center, Sookmyung Women's University, Korea

Some Highlights Recommendations from the Survey:

From the survey, women have reflected recommendations as follow;

1. Would like to see all accessible internet coverage area and also cover the important issues for women development.
2. Should have exact/ precise/ professional women websites / hub / e-services which affected to more income generating, family development as well as other relevant benefits to women. The regular / continuous PR about any success story of women i.e. example / idol, etc.
3. Should do all kinds of intensive PR about the women website / e-Services to be most known / most benefited to all groups & levels of women.
4. Should develop any kind of e-service / program from any relevant agency to develop / empower women as well as the general public at the best and the most they can.
5. Should have some e-Services about e-commerce, e-marketplace, e-education, e-vocation, e-training about ICT, languages learning, products design, etc.
6. The e-service from the government is very important to women development because of some reasons as follow;
 - 6.1. Should be all kinds of relevant information about women development
 - 6.2. Should classify any information & service to any different of women interest. Because women have all kinds of different needs and problems.
 - 6.3. The e-service system design should be friendly to all especially women.
 - 6.4. Should do the continuous PR as well as the systematic system of the e-service . And also should collaborate with all agencies at all levels : local, national, regional, and international those are working relevant to women development aims to coverage all groups of women.

Table 4: Situational Analysis about e-Services Relevancy among Thai Women & Thai Women Homeworkers

Situational Analysis (SWOT)	
Strengths	<p>1. Women Homeworkers:</p> <p>In the last years, an increased number of NGOs, civil society organizations and government agencies have been working on issues related to the HWs: Homenet Thailand, ILO, the Ministry of Labor, SMEs, the Thaitambon.com, the Thaicraft.com, civil society groups in Thailand are some of the actors involved. Partnerships among different stakeholders and sectors help create synergies in developing e-services that are useful for the community’s sustainable development.</p> <p>2. E-Services and ICT:</p> <p>The government of Thailand has a very concrete ICT Policy Framework that includes 4 key priorities: e-Commerce, e-Society, e-Industry, and e-Government. Ministry of ICT as well as its agencies i.e. the EGA, the ETDA, and others have been keeping its development of e-Services to serve all groups of people under the policy “e-Government for All” as well as the GAC (Government Application Center) aims to access more kinds of government services to all groups of people.</p>
Weakness	<p>1. About the women homeworkers:</p> <p>1.1 There are still no concrete or specific policies and framework on women homeworkers’ rights, welfares, career paths. The policy about informal or the non-formal economy still under pending for long. In addition, the definition of “homeworkers” in Thailand is still not clear. This has made it difficult for agencies to support homeworkers.</p> <p>1.2 There are quite less collaboration among all relevant agencies which work relevant to women development i.e. the Ministry of Labor for homeworkers or the informal economy besides from the formal economy; the Ministry of Human Development and Welfare; the Ministry of Interior, the Prime Minister Office.</p> <p>2. About the E-Services and ICT:</p> <p>2.1 Majority of women homeworkers are mostly being the small homeworkers with less education, less opportunities, less budget for their own investment, less knowledge and skills of ICT. This made most of the women homeworkes can not or gained less benefits from ICT. And also from the government side, there are still very least ICT training for the marginal groups including women especially the women homeworkers. There are some ICT trainings provided by some of the agencies (GOs, NGOs, BOs, POs) but still have less and least integration between the ICT and the</p>

Situational Analysis (SWOT)	
	<p>needs or the problem solving of the women homeworkers. This made all women and women homeworkers gained very least awareness on the potential of ICT for their own development. ICT is the other world from themselves. E-services also the similar situation because the women, the women homeworkers still have all fundamental skills, knowledge and awareness;</p> <p>2.2 e-Service and ICT form all relevant agencies still mainly for the middle class and upper class. Some of main barriers are ICT illiteracy, the English illiteracy, and the relevancy between the e-Services and their needs, etc.</p>
Opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More concrete policies, and strategies for women, women homeworkers under the e-Society policy of the government leading by the Ministry of ICT, and the others; 2. More accessible coverage areas of telecommunication to all groups of people all over the country, the USO is one among the accessible policy to all by NBTC as well as the telecentre / the ICT Community Learning Centre by MICT, the Community Learning Centre, etc.; 3. More affordable to all marginal groups especially after the FTA regulations implementation in all telecommunication sectors. Less monopolization, more friendly investment competitions and networks, etc. All those made price down in all telecommunication products and services; 4. More friendly devices and huge of applications for all epically all the online social media i.e. Line, Facebook, etc. <p><i>“Facebook amuses me. I can communicate with friends and instantly receive news. I am aware that social media has both advantages and disadvantages. Some might use Facebook for propaganda, other may use social media as their business channel”, said one of the women homeworkers Nid from Satul province.</i></p>
Threats	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relevant agencies and stakeholders spend quite less investments on ICT to empower all marginal groups including women, women homeworkers, handicaps, and the elderly citizen. This leads to weak policy, regulations, laws and welfare plans in favor of all those groups; 2. Still less policy and actions about e-Security for all marginal groups including women, women homeworkers, and etc. while more and more high risks from all ICT accessibility, etc.

Future Directions of ICT : e-Services for Thai Women & Thai Women Homeworkers

Under this current policy and plan of the Thailand Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy Framework (2011-2020) or IT 2020 has guided the development of Thailand's ICT in the first decade of the 21st century until the present. Its' flagships, the "5 e's strategy", emphasize the development and applications of ICT in five strategic areas, namely, e-Government, e-Industry, e-Commerce, e-Education and e-Society aiming to enhance the economy and quality of life of the Thai people and lead Thailand towards a knowledge-based economy and society then being the Smart Thailand as a whole.

In the development of the ICT2020 Policy Framework, the previous policy framework and the current status as well as the ICT development scenario of the country have been integrated. Furthermore, the consideration about all kinds of technological development and changes have been considered aims to serve all groups of people in the society : individuals, economy, industry and social transformation of the country as a whole. Besides, Thai government also focused on the preparation of Thailand to ASEAN in the year 2015. The six strategic areas are as follow especially the 6th strategy aiming for all kinds of e- inclusiveness development. Some high-lights are as follow;

- **Strategy 1** Economic Change (Economic transformation) is to prepare an appropriate environment to do business in order to attract trade, investment and business creation in the field of information technology and communications.
- **Strategy 2** The participation of the people and capacity building for the people (People empowerment and engagement) to improve the quality of life through access to ICT thoroughly and evenly at reasonable prices.
- **Strategy 3** Innovation is to promote information and communication technology industry for the Environment (Green) by using creativity and novelty including the promotion of research and innovation to strive for academic excellence.
- **Strategy 4** Infrastructure development (Infrastructure development) is the development of infrastructure, ICT to support services, information technology and communications across all communities in the region, including the management and integration of meteorological information warning systems and disaster (Disaster Management) to effectively and timely.
- **Strategy 5** Human capital development (Human capital development) is the development of human resources with ICT skills and capabilities to support the growth of the ICT industry and help promote other economy industries; and

- **Strategy 6** Reducing the digital gap (Bridging the digital divide) is to develop and promote the adoption of ICT to good use on a daily basis to build careers.

Some Details of the Relevant Strategy : Strategy 6 -ICT to Enhance Social Equality or e-Inclusiveness

This strategy aims to allow people to have secure rights in accessing and making use of telecommunications services and information in order to create economic, social and cultural opportunities in a comprehensive and just manner. The strategic actions and measures are as follows:

- 1.1 Provide information infrastructure which is distributed equitably, in order to narrow the digital divide, by aiming to disseminate ICT as a basic utility needed for ICT work as well as the high-speed internet network. In addition, promote and support research and development in ICT technology, tools and devices at affordable prices, along with assistive technologies for the PWD. Support technology transfer for production and service.
- 1.2 Reinforce knowledge, understanding and skills in using ICT for the general public in order to create knowledge and skills in the development and use of ICT that relates directly to the ways of life of people, various communities and to ensure astuteness about information. This is with a view to apply ICT to meet the needs of individuals, communities and localities, which will give rise to opportunities for increased employment and income.
- 1.3 Promote digital media which can be used in daily life and learning by the people. Communications resources should be allocated for educational television, developing electronic content in local languages, translating content or books, and creating content in sign language for the deaf. In addition, accelerate the definition of national standards for the format of electronic document archive modules. Support voluntary work in creating content that is suitable for communities, by using online social networks as the collaboration platform.
- 1.4 Provide electronic government services through various access channels and ensure that these services meet the needs of people in their daily life. This in order to facilitate people's access to information and social services and increase their participation in public administration and services. In any case, appropriate ICT standards should be used, for instance, standards for web accessibility that

allow the PWD and elderly to access the government information and services on an equitable basis.

- 1.5 Promote the creation of online creative communities or learning society, web portals, diverse electronic content, and social groupings that are robust. Learning networks should be set up among educational institutions, temples, libraries and community learning centers in order to facilitate access to useful learning and information resources. They will also stimulate the dissemination, exchange, learning and enhancement of local wisdom with modern science. This will lead to a lifelong learning society, along with the creation, enhancement, transfer and integration of knowledge that is suitable for the development of communities. Promote people to access, be aware of, understand and respect social and cultural diversity that exists in the country.
- 1.6 Strengthen trust and confidence as well as security in using electronic media by accelerating the development of laws or regulations that are necessary for using electronic media safely. Encourage the people to have knowledge and understanding about existing laws and self-protection from online threats. Organize activities to disseminate knowledge or training activities to develop knowledge, understanding and wisdom about information and to become astute in using media. This is with a view to people being aware of risks and dangers that might occur in the online community. Promote the use of social mechanisms to build online communities or society in a creative manner, in line with the approach of self-monitoring.

The ICT2020 framework pays special attention to creating opportunities or reducing gaps in accessing critical basic services among all groups of people of the country under its mission of “Smart Thailand”. So, the E-Government : e-Service is currently the top priority among the other policies of Thailand. Because under the Electronic Government Agency (EGA) is exploring emerging technologies such as cloud computing and mobile development, and is now making its way towards better government IT infrastructure. EGA Director, Sak Segknoonthod said “The goal is for Thailand to offer universal government services online by 2015, allowing public access via any device around the clock.” The future direction for the government is to achieve integrated services development by sharing data, information and services across government organizations, establish high-level management oversight and supervision in the implementation of e-government programs, fostering innovation and combining better services and lower costs while still having impact on more people.

When it concerns women and girls' accessibility to public e-services such as e-health, e-education and employment, organizations and agencies such as the Prime Ministry Office, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, the Thai Women Empowerment Fund, the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Interior, the Institute of SME, UN Women, Telecentre Women Academy, ILO, UNESCO, FAO, UNICEF, the Population Development Association, the Rural Women's Craft Co-operative, HomeNet Thailand, Thai Women Empowerment Fund, and others, are also playing an active role in guiding the direction that e-services in Thailand should take.

Some of the concrete drives of women e-literacy in Thailand are as follow;

OVER 1 MILLION WOMEN EMPOWERED WITH DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS

The [Telecentre Women: Digital Literacy Campaign](#) launched by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the telecentre.org Foundation has reached its in 2013 with a total of **1,014,096** disadvantaged women trained in basic digital literacy skills. This result is a key step forward towards the achievement of goal 3 of the UN Millennium Development Goals – promote gender equality and empower women.

Since 2008, the Thai Ministry of ICT has made the Telecentre program one of its top policy priorities in its effort to reduce the digital divide in Thailand and provide Internet access to all members of society. Since then, The Research Centre of Development and Communication Knowledge and Management (CCDKM) at Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU), APTN (Asia Pacific Telecentre Network) and many other stakeholders including UN agencies, NGOs, and academia, have been effortlessly working together to reduce the digital divide and alleviate poverty at the grassroots by promoting ICT literacy, life-long learning initiatives, entrepreneurship and e-commerce strategies.

Today, as an outcome of the Telecentre Women: Digital Literacy Campaign, over 1 million disadvantaged women have been empowered with the digital literacy skills required to improve their employability, access information, and utilize e-Government : e-Services. A Certificate of Appreciation for the strong support given to this successful Campaign was awarded to Dr. Kamolrat Intaratat, Chair of APTN, for actively involving in this global initiative thousands of grassroots telecentres in Thailand and in the Asia Pacific.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vCBVN4HZgsU>, [APTN Asia Pacific Telecentre Network \(www.APTN.asia\)](http://www.APTN.asia)

ICT for Women & Girls Empowerment : Empowering Women through ICT in APTN : Thailand (under the TCW 2013)

Background of Empowering Women Through ICT : APTN : Thailand

One among the APTN fundamental functions among all member countries is how to use ICT to empower all the girls and women of the region. As being the regional hub for all for Developing countries in Asia and the Pacific networks all have their commitment in using ICT because all have proven that ICT could be one among their women & girls challenging opportunities in paving their own better future starting of their more accessibility, their more learning opportunities, their more jobs and working opportunities, and especially their own self –sufficiency and confidence.

TCW (Telecentre Women) implemented among all APTN Member Countries since 2012 till currently. More and more stakeholders have been involved and participate in this TCW programs such as Intel, Microsoft, Cisco, Ministry of ICT, UNESCO, ASEAN Foundation, and others. E- Women Campaign as well as the E- ASEAN Young Entrepreneurs is one among the success cases of the APTN region along with all the current and fast emerging of ICT, more and more applications of ICT have been designed to support all kinds of empowering activities to them all especially about self –learning, online learning, hybrid learning, etc.

E-Empowerment : ICT Trainings for Women & Girls in Thailand

The Telecentre Women (TCW) Project opened the opportunity to young and adult women like the homeworkers, out-schools girls, women farmers, women vendor, handicap girls & women , aged women, etc. to gain ICT knowledge and skills enabling them to become self-confident and self-sufficient. To bridge the digital divide and reach out to one of the vulnerable groups in the society, the series of training in ICT for young and adult women was timely and imperative.

FROM HOME-BASED WORKERS TO BECOMING THE EWOMEN GROUPS OF THAILAND



From April to December 2013 a total of trainings had been conducted more than 50 times

among all types of women and girls and had been participated in by various groups youth and adult women. The trainings aimed to empower youth and adult women using ICT as a tool. Trainings included basic computer literacy and ICT training to improve production and marketing for small and medium enterprisers. The knowledge and skills the youth and adult women learned from the training is intended to improve themselves and their lives. Through the trainings many youth and adult women are now using ICT to start their own small businesses while for others to improve their products and the way they manage their business. After learning how to use the internet to search for information, they found out that they can improve the branding of their products and even learn new trends in product design. They also discovered that they can sell their products using internet.



One among the first training conducted is the Training for Trainers (ToT). The idea is to train young and adult women in ICT so that they could also conduct training to other women in their community. More than 10 batches of Training of Trainers (ToT) was conducted on the duration of the project with more than 100 participants have been transforming themselves to be the trainers.

Thaitelecentres served as a hub for all trainings conducted with the telecentre operators as the trainers. Committed to serving their communities, the telecentre operators encourage women in their area to participate in the training. According to one telecentre operator, encouraging the women homeworkers to attend the training is hard mostly because they are afraid to use technology and believe that they cannot learn how to use computer but once they learn how to use it they expressed their gratitude to the telecentre operators for encouraging them. Then this group of trainers trained another group in using technology.

In this training conducted to the home-based workers group of homeworkers' leaders at the Thaitelecentre they learned that ICT can help them a lot in creating their products. At the beginning they are doubtful about using computers and technology as well because they are not familiar with how it works but after attending the training they discovered that it's not so hard. With the help of the



trainer they learned how to put design on the products they create. The products they use come from the scrap materials thrown away in their community. Their business is to turn these scraps into something new.

Innovation, creativity, diligence, and hard work are the values one can visibly see in this group of eWomen.

A group of home-based workers from Southern part of Thailand doing handicrafts attended the basic ICT Training. At the beginning they were hesitant to even touch the computers but after sometime they enjoyed using it. “This is my first time to use a computer because I do not have a computer at home. I think it is very interesting to learn about it.”



During the training in the Northeast part of Thailand, one of the participants said, “*I never thought, I would learn and enjoy using computers. But now after this training, I would like to learn more about it. I am glad to be a participant in this training.*”

“*Right now I use agency to make brochure to promote our family business. Our business name is Karen Wang Nam Yad, it is Karen Village for tourism. After attending the training, I learned how to make brochure using Microsoft Word. It is easy and I can make it myself. It is very timely because I can use it for our business.*”

“*I promote our business through brochure, internet, and magazine. Sometimes when I order brochures they do not meet my expectations. If I can do the brochures it will be cost and time saving. If I can save money, our business could earn more. Through this training, I can help our family business.*”



“*Our family has a grocery shop in the tourist area. After attending the training for SMEs, I learned how to use Excel to manage our business’ expenses.*”

“*I want to promote my product (weave cloth) to the world. At present, only few people know about our product, if I want people to know it, I have to go to OTOP Centre or through exhibition at Impact. I expect through this training, I will be able to market my product so many people will know it.*”

“Through this training I can do a brochure to advertise and promote my business, I don’t need to hire somebody to do that for me. Saves money!” one participant said after the training.

“I want to have a bakery shop, I love making handicrafts, I love computer graphics, I would like to have a coffee shop...” these are just some of the dreams of the participants, and the ICT Training for SMEs is a chance for them to make their dreams come true.

“I want to promote our province Li,Lamphun through creating a new product out of Longgan, like chilli paste. If people learn that Longgan Chili Paste originated from Li, Lamphun, many people would know and go to Li,Lamphun and they would buy my product and other products from Li,Lamphun as well. I believe that ICT could help me expand my business especially through the use of Social Media like Facebook.”



Mr. Kridsda Pinta
conducting Basic ICT
Training at Girl
Development Center



Maejo University
students conducting
Basic ICT training at Li,
Lamphun and Kued
Chang

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6. Strengthen trust and confidence as well as security in using electronic media by accelerating the development of laws or regulations that are necessary for using electronic media safely. Encourage the people to have knowledge and understanding about existing laws and self-protection from online threats. Organize activities to disseminate knowledge or training activities to develop knowledge, understanding and wisdom about information and to become astute in using media. This is with a view to people being aware of risks and dangers that might occur in the online community. Promote the use of social mechanisms to build online communities or society in a creative manner, in line with the approach of self-monitoring.

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When it concerns women and girls' accessibility to public e-services such as e-health, e-education and employment, organizations and agencies such as the Prime Ministry Office, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, the Thai Women Empowerment Fund, the

Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Interior, the Institute of SME, UN Women, Telecentre Women Academy, ILO, UNESCO, FAO, UNICEF, the Population Development Association, the Rural Women's Craft Co-operative, HomeNet Thailand, Thai Women Empowerment Fund, and others, are also playing an active role in guiding the direction that e-services in Thailand should take. One of the concrete drive of women e-literacy in Thailand especially among all the general women as well as the marginal women, homeworkers in Thailand along with the other women in ASEAN community too.

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