

Empowering women through ICT in Tourism

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Introduction :

- Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in tourism and travel activity began the first stage in 1970 , through the computer reservation system, the second stage in 1980 by using the global distribution systems (GDS) and the current stage began in 1990 by using the internet .

- Many establishments of the tourism such as : Tours' offices , tours and airways companies, motor renting companies, hotels and organizer of the extensive tours used the tourist websites to present their activities and do their business .
- ICT investments have consistently been ranked as a major factor in the operation of hospitality business
- The evaluation of ICT investments and benefits can be well known through these elements : -
- Financial performance, innovation and learning, facilitate internal business operations, technology enabling impacts an improving guest's experience and effectiveness of technology systems .
- ICT has , in fact , affected the travel and tourism industry for at least the last 50 years (SABRE) , The first airline computer system was developed by IBM and American airlines in 1953) , particularly in the area of automation and networking of distribution channels .

Women and ICT :

ICT is very important for the distribution of alternate and equitable portrayals of women and their potential , they are also important for facilities analysis of women situation and developing active strategies to improve that situation .

The women ICT activities are more of a being a movement gathering momentum supported by a network of peers utilizing ICTs for communication , coordination , information and experience sharing : they help the women to develop confidence and experience in expressing their viewpoints publicly by allowing space for experimentation and enabling them to find allies across communities , natives and regions .

Other advantages of ICTs for women include the far lower cost , once the initial financial investment is made , which encourags women to articulate their views publicly the new kind of communication space which is decentralized and allowed the instantaneous "registration" of many voices and view points the result can be hybridized , genuinely integrated product with possibilities for new kinds of discussion .

ICTs are allowing the development of alternative modes of communicating and acting which go beyond rhetoric into the exploration of new models for action .

*** Barriers for women in Egypt to the full use of ICTs .**

There are many barriers to the use of ICT especially for women such as :

- The cost of internet access at all levels makes it inaccessible for the majority of women , computers and modems are imported from industrialized countries with accompanying increases in transportation and duties and also the disadvantages exchange rates , as well as the cost of telephone lines are generally undependable , while the electricity supply can be erratic .
- Other problems include lack of access for training , lack of technical information , lack of computer's parts and repair , high rates technological obsolescence and lack of human skills and language because most training packages , software and electronic conference and journals are in English
- Additionally : cultural attitudes and experience in incorporating electronic networks , also the economic hardships make it impossible for women to use the ICT and the high rate of illiteracy in Egypt and money problem to educate all subjects especially the languages and computer use and advanced training
- Social influence on women's relationship to technology
- Also affect women's attitudes toward ICTs , and most of women feel "fear and embarrassment" when dealing with ICTs .

*** Overcoming Barriers :**

- First of all we have to ensure that education for all women must be for free or very cheap and allowed everywhere especially for the international languages , Computer science , internet and most of communication technology to wiping out illiteracy .
- To ensure Women's participation in ICTs , they should be supported in creating their own technological processes , abilities to fulfill their productive and community management roles more efficiently and effectively .
- We can overcome illiteracy by making a center for communications , women's self-employment and through many successful literacy products , tie literacy training to a package of skills and services provided to support women's entrepreneurial activities , the center provides classes aimed to self-employment , such as serving , cleaning and drying fish , rug weaving reading lessons , lessons in computer technology and typing
- It's very important to plan for facilitating education and training for women and girls like : training in the use of FIDO networks , technical support and training from the ENDA system administrator and a female technician from green net , support for the workshop costs from an external donor , modems for the 12th non-Senegalese participants by CABECA / PADIS and green net .

*** Women in the tourism field and ICT :**

(ICT) can help the women making travel and tourism decisions such as :

(A) using the internet resources increase the number of people which are using internet to research purchase travel and tourism services , research alternative suppliers and to compare prices across suppliers .

This new technology is the best means to sell services as it enables dealing with many millions of persons all over the world and it is a good way for improving the tourism shape as it enables the countries which ar distinguished tourists places . So , through the internet women can make the reservation for any tour according to these steps :

- 1 – To get information about the most important websites in tourism field to decide the historical sight seen to visit .
- 2 – To identify different offers and tourism programs of various tourism places decide the best offer according to the people needs .
- 3 – The offers and programs must include pictures of the tourism places like the pyramids , Islamic and Coptic monuments , Museums , temples , tombs and places .
- 4 – The reservation through the E-mail or mobile to decide the prices of tours and hotels .
- 5 – The decision of the tour's date and time must be limited
- 6 – Recognizing the people needs and the best kinds of food must be prepared , also the ages of the tourists and arranged the best tour and accommodation for all of them .

Women behavior in the tourism field .

- Women are working in this field especially the guides are advantaged by patience , knowledge , respecting the time , and they always get an idea about the tourist's countries .
- Women are very care to get a good idea about the traditions and customs of the tourists for offering a good service to the people
- They are also care about their appearance

(B) Wireless technology such as : the mobile :

The mobile information technology offers new possibilities for knowledge enhancement and also for values creation through unique tourism service . There is now opportunity for people to preserve and organize their personal information in digital form over a lifetime .

The mobile can send and receive the voice and picture at the same time to make the reservation of the tour, it is very easy and very fast way especially for people who can not use the internet at that moment

The Women guides must learn the use of mobiles to display some pictures about the tourism places and museums with historical notes So, the mobile learning offers more than just providing an electronic guide to offer different options to the people and making a good business from their houses just through the mobile .

(C) The Electronic Guide :

It is a new project that can help the tourists who do not arrange for a tour with a tour guide to get the information of the sight seen like the electronic guide of the Egyptian museum which explains the master pieces of the Museum in chronological way .

This electronic guide is very simple and consists of 2 parts :

The first one is the recorder and the second is the headset . This electronic-guide is used now in the Egyptian museum .

(D) Dynamic map display and books

- Tourists most often use two commonly available types of publications : guide books , maps and often use both in combination (Brown and Chalmers, 2003) Guide books provide in a standardized and catalogue way information about attractions and places of interest in a city (accommodation , pub / bass , high clubs , restaurants , Museums ... etc)
- Using maps with guide books as reference , tourists can find out on a map where the places are located , the approximate distance between two different places and to help tourists in arranging their activities .
- This method of ICT can be used by the women in tourism field to display all kind of tourism like the aphetic , historical , cultural , archaeological and sport tourism with a list of places of each kind. So , both : map view display (MVD) and list view display (LVD) can help in tourism industry . For example : Safari tour at Sharmelshiekh in Sinai because through the (MVD) can find out the tour way especially in case of getting lost in the desert and also use in the Museum to explain their sections .
- In particular maps and (LVD) have a big value of tourists as they have the potential to represent large amounts of information about the area of interest within a single picture in a potentially easily comprehensive form (zip f , 2002 : 331) , furthermore pro-active recommendation of tourist attractions , e-booking and 3D pictures allow tourists to get experience virtual tours .

Women development through ICT in tourism field can be carried out from home according to the following instructions :

- Creation of E-learning center under the auspices of ministry of higher education , specialized in tourism industry , particularly to advance the education of women who could not otherwise obtain a traditional education , or CDs courses at home or DVDs .
- For Example : The electronic guide is not easy to use so , the women need courses to learn how to use it and explain that to the tourists specially about the Safari travels and ships on the sea , courses on the rivers , the Oasis of Egypt such as (El Dakhla , El Kharga , El Farafra) and in Sinai , courses of various tourism programs all over Egypt . The transportation in all Egypt and the best ways for the tourists
- The reservation of the electronic ticketing for air travel through the internet : the computer technology ticket printing and distribution , many airlines and GDS vendors now use magnetic strip tickets requiring travel agents to have international air transport association (IATA) approved ATB-2 (Automated ticket and boarding pass) printers to

print them . ATB-2 ticket printers are designed to print information on the front of the ticket and encode the magnetic strip on the reverse side with the information using a magnetic head .

- These tickets contain passenger , fare and itinerary information on the magnetic strip , facilitate the Check-in process and information collection and control

The Machines at the boarding gate are ready to accept the tickets and extract from the magnetic strip the information required .

- These tickets are more convenient for travelers as the boarding pass is attached , and will soon be mandatory .
- The delivery of tickets to travelers is being affected by computer so , the women can send the tickets from home to the travelers , which called (ETDN) electronic ticket delivery network . under the name of the travel agent .
- ETDNs have numerous of benefits , first : for the travelers , the ability to receive tickets quickly and conveniently.
- Second , the travel agent experiences increase geographic market coverage , by allowing agents to service clients any where ETDN printers exist . Also with types II and IV the hours of operation are extended .
- Transportation and transfer : women can help in these points by ICT like using the mobile at the arrival time to help in meeting point and time in the Air port to achieve easy transportation to hotels .
- Invitations to the tourism conferences can be done through internet and E-mails by women from home with nice advertisements of the most important sightseenes in Egypt , that include the preparation of the best food for all people according to their nationalities .
- In general , women can help in tourism field from any specialized tourism place or agent or from home, but they must know the main elements of tourism making and kind of services represented by them such as : hotels , tourism companies , car renting companies , Airway companies , restaurants and cafeterias , international establishments , antiques and tourism shops , tourism information centers , commercial rules , international and regional systems and rules .

*** Conclusion**

- ICT will allow women to secure their future and enhance their professional lives allowing them to educate them selves in order to gain equality with men in changing the technological society .
- ICT allows women to research and find out about other countries beyond Egypt and the luxury of the world at their finger tips .
- This research is a good example of women's use of ICT in Africa .

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