

Study on the Factors for Developing and Supplying e-Services for ASEAN Women

Young-Kyu Moh* Associate Professor of Economics, Sookmyung Women's University

Abstract

Along with the arrival of the knowledge and information society, accessibility and capacity of utilizing information and communication technology (ICT) became indispensable right in these days. Despite the continued efforts, however, women in ASEAN countries are suffering from double hardships of ICT development differences among inter countries and intra country information gap as socially underprivileged group. A survey was conducted to measure current status of the e-Service provision of the ASEAN member countries and future needs of potential demand for e-Services. By analyzing survey data collected from the ASEAN countries, we found several important implications that we should take into account when developing and providing e-Services. The first one is the importance of the public relations. Another important implication is the homogenous perception on e-Service usefulness but heterogenous demand for e-Services among ASEAN countries. Another thing to note is that internet access through computer is limited but access through mobile is widely available in this region. These factors should be considered when developing and supplying e-Services to this region.

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* E-mail: ykmoh@sm.ac.kr

I . Introduction

Along with the arrival of the knowledge and information society, accessibility and capacity of utilizing information and communication technology (ICT) became indispensable right in these days. Due to this reason, many countries tried to enhance ICT capacities for the underprivileged including women. Despite the continued efforts, however, women in ASEAN countries are suffering from double hardships of ICT development differences among inter countries and intra country information gap as socially underprivileged group. Furthermore, institutional system that can diagnose and suggest policy recommendation on the information gap for women in the ASEAN region does not exist so far and this adds more hardships to women. For private and public exchange and cooperation, the information capacity gap among Asian women is one of the major problems that needs to be resolved and requires anticipative plans.

For many developing countries, efficient public service delivery and institutional capacity building takes central role in development strategies. Recently, the adoption of ICT in public sector—particularly through the e-Government Services (hereafter e-Services)—has become a policy priority for many governments in both developed and developing countries. According to the definition of the e-Government by the United Nations, “the use of ICT and its application by the government for the provision of information and public services to the people” (UN, 2004), public services provided through the ICTs can be called e-Services.

E-Services start to play important role in development since they can accelerate public service delivery, improve government accountability, encourage civil participation in decision making processes, and many more (ITU, 2011). In this sense, e-Services can take significant role in connecting public administration to sustainable long-term growth. Particularly, e-Services can increase representation of marginalized groups in the public sector, such as women, and eventually improve their welfare significantly. Motivated by these facts, this research focuses on observing and analyzing development and delivery of livelihood-based e-Services for ASEAN women as well as identifying challenges and opportunities in utilizing e-Service to promote gender equality in public service.

We are also interested in figuring out what factors should be considered when providing e-Services, particularly for ASEAN. By doing these we may contribute to i) improve participation of ASEAN women into the knowledge-information society, ii) improve e-Service capacity for women related government sector, and iii) fortify Korean-ASEAN cooperation by sharing Korean e-Service experience and model. To achieve above objectives, we will focus on the following