

Understanding nuances of gender inclusion in digital ID systems



Observations from
the field

the
Inclusion
Hub

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The A2U framework was conceptualised using various research methodologies to consolidate information

To conceptualise the **Awareness, Access, and Usage** framework, the team used various methods



Primary Research

Understanding women's experiences through ethnographic and semi-structured interviews



Secondary Research

Exhaustive literature review



Ecosystem Engagements

Participation and presentations in global convenings with ecosystem experts



Community of Practice

Virtually convening relevant on-ground stakeholders



Awareness



Identification of possible avenues to understand digital systems and digital IDs
(OECD, 2018)

Access



Connecting and being able to leverage digital systems
(Aranda-Jan and Qasim, 2023)

Usage



Continuously using and improving connection with digital systems
(UNICEF, 2021)

Leveraging global examples to understand women's experiences with their relevant digital IDs



Ethiopia: Apti's research team engaged with the Fayda ID system this year. Ethiopia has been able to leverage their pilot program to roll out the registration process at a national level and enrol more than 3.5 million residents to date.



India: The observations focused solely on women's experiences with the digital ID system and were conducted in rural, peri-urban, urban areas.



Philippines: Further down their journey, the PhilSys ID has already enrolled over 82 million users and are in the process of building out the ecosystem of essential services that can be authenticated using a foundational digital ID. Apti is currently in the process of understanding the PhilSys ID.

Understanding the rationale behind the A2U framework



When interacting with digital ID systems, women face various types of challenges that inhibit their willingness and ability



Information Challenge

Women often face challenges to access information that pertains to how they can interact with digital or identity systems



Resource constraints

In order to access and obtain their identities, women face a plethora of logistical and resource based challenges



Normative challenges

Women continue to face structural challenges that are often enforced by the societal structure that they are part



Intermediaries and grievance redressal

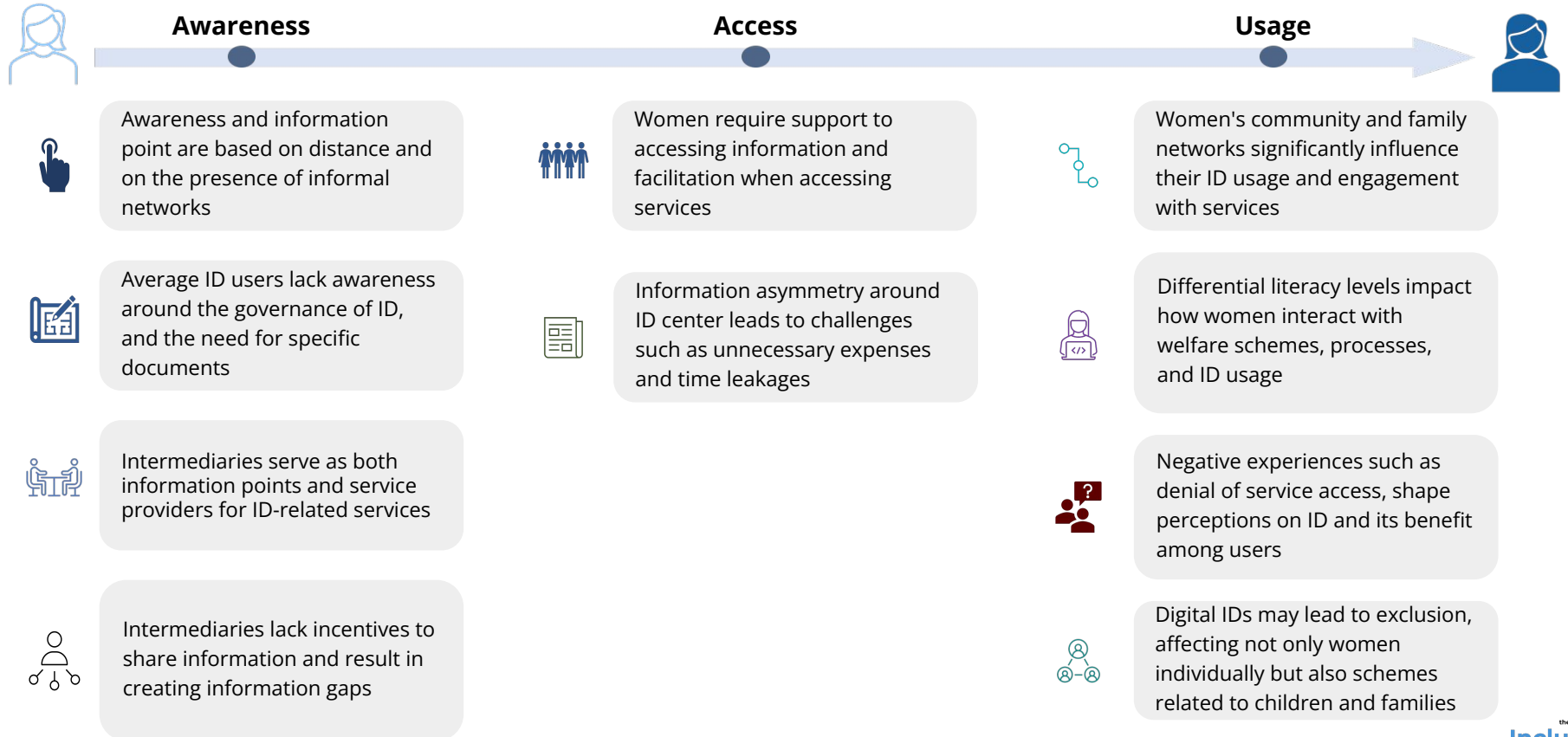
Limited offline intermediaries often increase hesitation amongst women to interact continuous with such systems



Biases and hindrances

Systems often display inherent technological and normative biases that further inhibit women from interacting with ID systems

Barriers for women when leveraging IDs are similar in some instances and can be addressed more robustly



Emerging challenges from the rural and urban field explorations



In rural settings, women often face multifarious hurdles when trying to avail, access, and use ID (1/3)

Information Barrier



Information gaps between formal and informal intermediaries impact the way women obtain information



Personal or shared ownership of digital devices is often lower in rural settings, making information access more challenging



Information about centers can often be outdated, vague or absent creating information asymmetry and uninformed decision making



There is a lack of information among ID users on utilizing foundational digital IDs to access services

In rural settings, women often face multifarious hurdles when trying to avail, access, and use ID (2/3)

Resource and logistical constraints



Logistics planning creates various economic and non-economic costs for women resulting in selecting inefficient pathways to register or avail services



In low-resource settings, dependability and functioning of centers varies due to uninformed changes of circumstances, such as closed or relocated centers often impacting logistical planning



The absence of relevant documents, including functional IDs, acts as a barrier for women in obtaining a foundational ID, thereby hindering access to essential services



Biometric authentication failures require updates at the ID level, and the process of updation may add variable costs that often impact women due to financial dependence

In rural settings, women often face multifarious hurdles when trying to avail, access, and use ID (3/3)

Normative constraints



Despite having notional ownership over IDs, women are dependent on male family members for usage decision, center access, and taking financial and logistical decisions.



Androcentric structures burden women with invisibilized household responsibilities, often reducing time and availability to obtain ID



IDs are often leveraged to access informal systems as well, and can often work to gate-keep women from such settings



Women's ownership of digital devices are often controlled and limited by family members, often resulting in women's inability to obtain information or access digital services

In urban settings, women's challenges might differ, arising from a range of factors such as lack of information and unavailability of resources (1/3)

Information Barrier



Women may be unaware of future challenges when registering, such as incorrect credential entering and facing number linking complexities



A lack of digital and educational literacy further hampers ways to collect relevant and accurate information about centers and processes



Unaddressed implications around ID theft, misplaced credentials, data security further hinders women's usage of such ID systems



Information about ID systems (including portal and consent form) might often exist in different or inaccessible language(s), limiting women's ability to consolidate relevant information

In urban settings, women's challenges might differ, arising from a range of factors such as lack of information and unavailability of resources (2/3)

Resource and logistical constraints



Limited government ID centers in the vicinity, compared to private centers



Multiple trips to find trusted private intermediaries often leads to logistical and resource spend



Even within urban spaces, the varying presence of ID authority centers can often lead to access related challenges for women



Gaps in formal education proof emerged as one of the biggest hurdle for women in changing ID credentials. E.g- DOB, Name

In urban settings, women's challenges might differ, arising from a range of factors such as lack of information and unavailability of resources (3/3)

Normative constraints



Women's reduced agency, limited digital literacy, and uncertainty around financial transactions can further impact the need to get ID and its usage



'Nominal ID ownership' due to socio-normative constraints around ID possession and usage result in the inability to truly have ownership over women's identities



A woman's need for an ID is often determined by its purpose, often disincentivizing informally employed women from obtaining any form of ID

Exploring enablers appearing in urban and rural areas



Enablers for women's ability appear in various ways in rural areas, attempting to fill gaps that might emerge from the existing system (1/3)

Awareness



Operators fill in the information gap by acting as sources of relevant information



Community leaders are vital stakeholders that play a crucial role in information dissemination



Social and family relationships enables information sharing and communication



Resources like television and newspaper provides relevant information to women about ID

Enablers for women's ability appear in various ways in rural areas, attempting to fill gaps that might emerge from the existing system (2/3)

Access



Women's ID decisions are often influenced by group information and action, which can collectively drive engagement



The ID authority collaborates with other government intermediaries to enhance digital ID access



Initiatives to shift or recreate service centers, based on the need and footfall of people



Women prioritize familiarity and community support over convenience during facility selection

Enablers for women's ability appear in various ways in rural areas, attempting to fill gaps that might emerge from the existing system (3/3)

Usage



Leveraging existing networks to act as access points for availing services



Presence of CSC type centers and facilities ensures frequent ID usage for services applications

Enablers for women's ability appear in various ways in urban areas, attempting to fill gaps that might emerge during implementation (1/3)

Awareness



Operators and center staff often provide information during the registration process



Informal intermediaries situated in the vicinity of women's homes facilitates easy access to information



Hyper availability and easy to access sources (resource centers) reduce women's cost to access information



Community based entities provide support to facilitate information dissemination, service access, and other ancillary services

Enablers for women's ability appear in various ways in urban areas, attempting to fill gaps that might emerge during implementation (2/3)

Access



Presence of women operators at the centres can play a positive role for women in accessing services



Presence of low cost and dependable intermediaries establishes a network of trust for future access



Presence of supportive champions of change, community members, elected officials often strengthens women's ability to access centers

Enablers for women's ability appear in various ways in urban areas, attempting to fill gaps that might emerge during implementation (3/3)

Usage



Family program and welfare schemes aimed at women and children acts as incentives for ID obtainment and usage



Digitally literate children support their parents and facilitate usage on their behalf



Intermediaries providing support to women during the whole ID journey and its usage can help to build trust and confidence.



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