

# Fewer women own phones compared to men. But due to shared use, the usage of phones is not very different between men and women.

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A recent national survey of ICT use in Myanmar has found that even though men in Myanmar use phones more frequently than women, the difference is small. 59% of men said they had used a phone in the month preceding the survey, while 52% of women said the same. This difference is significantly lower than the access gap that was seen in Pakistan, Bangladesh and India at similar stages of market liberalization over a decade ago.

The ownership gap (difference between men vs. women who own a mobile phone and active SIM card) however is more stark – 45% of men owned a phone and active SIM while only 32% women did so.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS/ RECOMMENDATIONS

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| <p><b>1. Though ownership of phones is significantly lower among women, it is not that women's use of mobile phones is less than that of a man</b></p> | <p><b>2. Despite the ownership gap, the access gap is less stark. Women and men use phones (be it their own or a household shared phone), though</b></p> | <p><b>men tend to use the phone more frequently compared to women</b></p> |
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## THE RESEARCH

### I. FIRST NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE SURVEY OF ICT USE IN MYANMAR

LIRNEasia conducted what is considered to be the first nationally representative sample survey of ICT & knowledge use & needs in Myanmar. It included 8130+ surveys of individuals at household level, and 420 cluster level surveys (a cluster refers to a ward in urban areas and a village in rural areas). The fieldwork was carried out in February/March of this year (2015), and is representative of 91.8% of the population, with +/- 2.5% margin of error (1).

### II. WOMEN OWN FEWER PHONES THAN MEN. BUT IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT THEY USE PHONES ANY LESS (THAN MEN)

Our data shows that there is a significant difference in mobile phone ownership between men and women. 45% of men owned a phone while only 32% of women did.

Even though some women don't own a phone, they do still use phones. If it's not their own phone, it's a household phone (fixed or mobile), or the mobile belonging to another member of the household. As a result, when it comes to usage, the gender gap is not as high - The percentage of women who say they have never used a phone is 33%, compared to 28% among men.

But men are more frequent callers than women. 33% of men say they have used a phone in the past hour or same day as the survey, while only 25% women say the same. This is not surprising, since more men own phones, and therefore are likely to have more frequent access and in turn, make more calls.

### III. INCOME IS THE PRIMARY DRIVER; GENDER IS SECONDARY

Whether one is rich or poor appears to drive ownership and adoption much more than whether one is male or female. Our data shows that poor women are more similar to poor men than richer women when it comes to phone ownership and use. For example, 16% of women from richer households had never made a call, while more than double (40%) of women from poor households had never done so – a significant difference. But 13% of men from richer households also had never used a phone, a number much closer to the richer women. 35% of men from poorer households had not made a call, a number closer to poorer women.

### IV. PURPOSE OF CALLS DIFFER SOMEWHAT AMONG MEN AND WOMEN

On average, 27% of the calls taken by men are related to their livelihood, as opposed to the 16% reported by women. For both, the largest proportion of calls were for

social purposes. In addition, women appear to make more calls related to day to day purchases (23%) for their households when compared to men (a mere 16%).

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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### **SOURCES**

(1) Detailed methodology note at  
<http://lirneasia.net/projects/2012-2014-research-program/responding-to-the-policy-window-in-myanmar-to-help-lay-foundation-for-inclusion/btr/dm/>

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

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