THE ROLE OF RESEARCH IN TELECENTER DEVELOPMENT
Why does research matter?

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WELL PLANNED
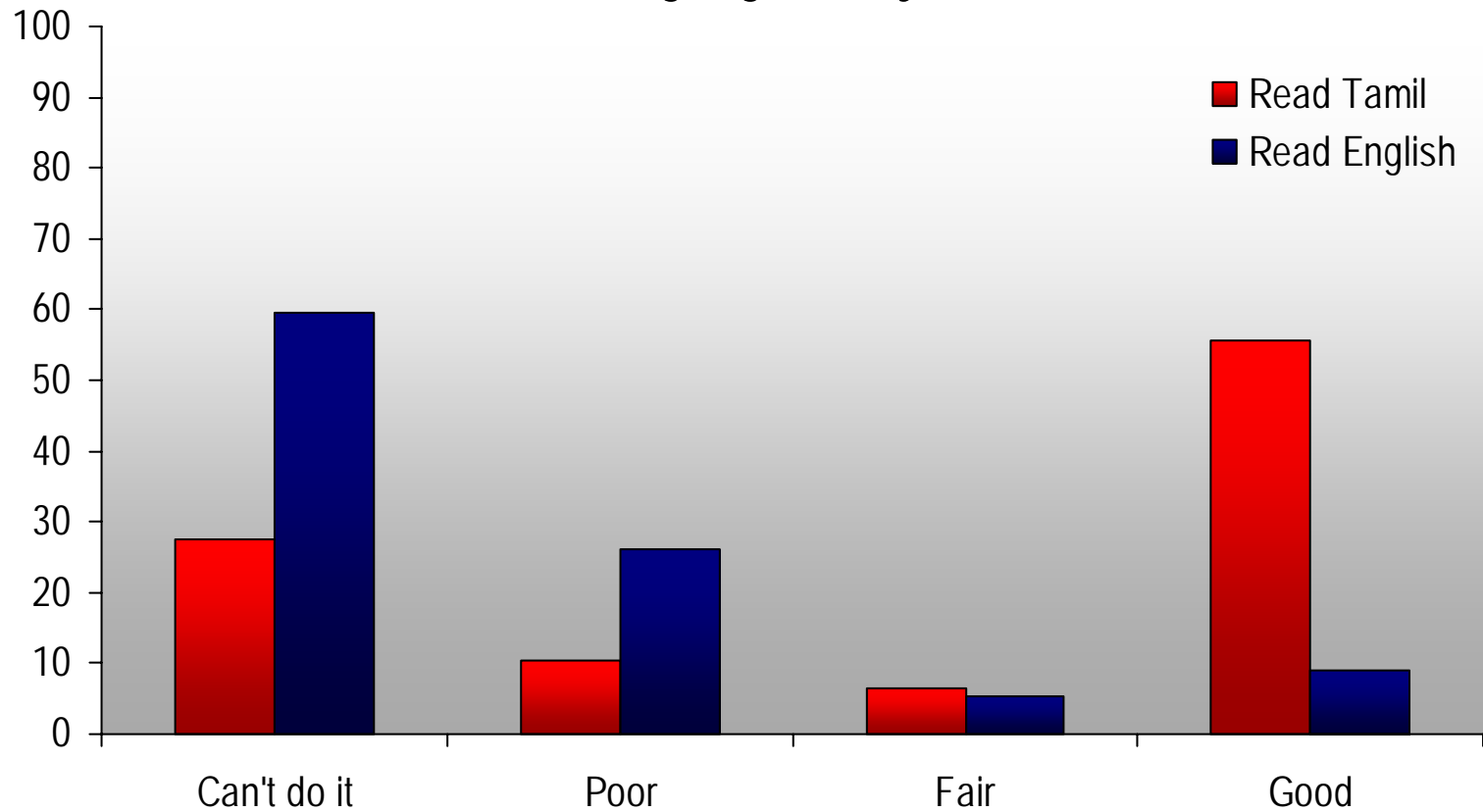
WELL MANAGED

USABLE AND USED

USEFUL!

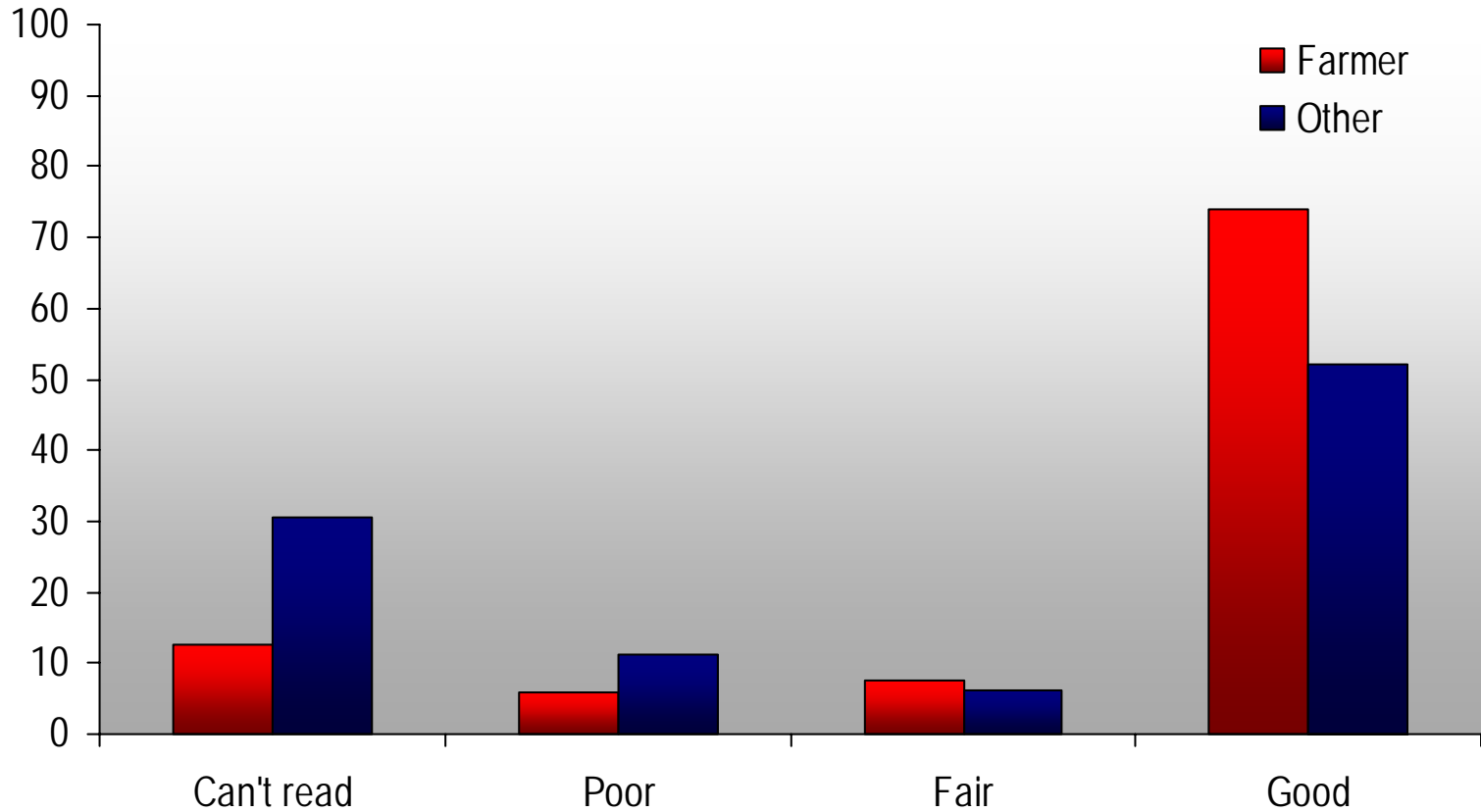# A first step: Assessing community needs

Some basic information about our villages
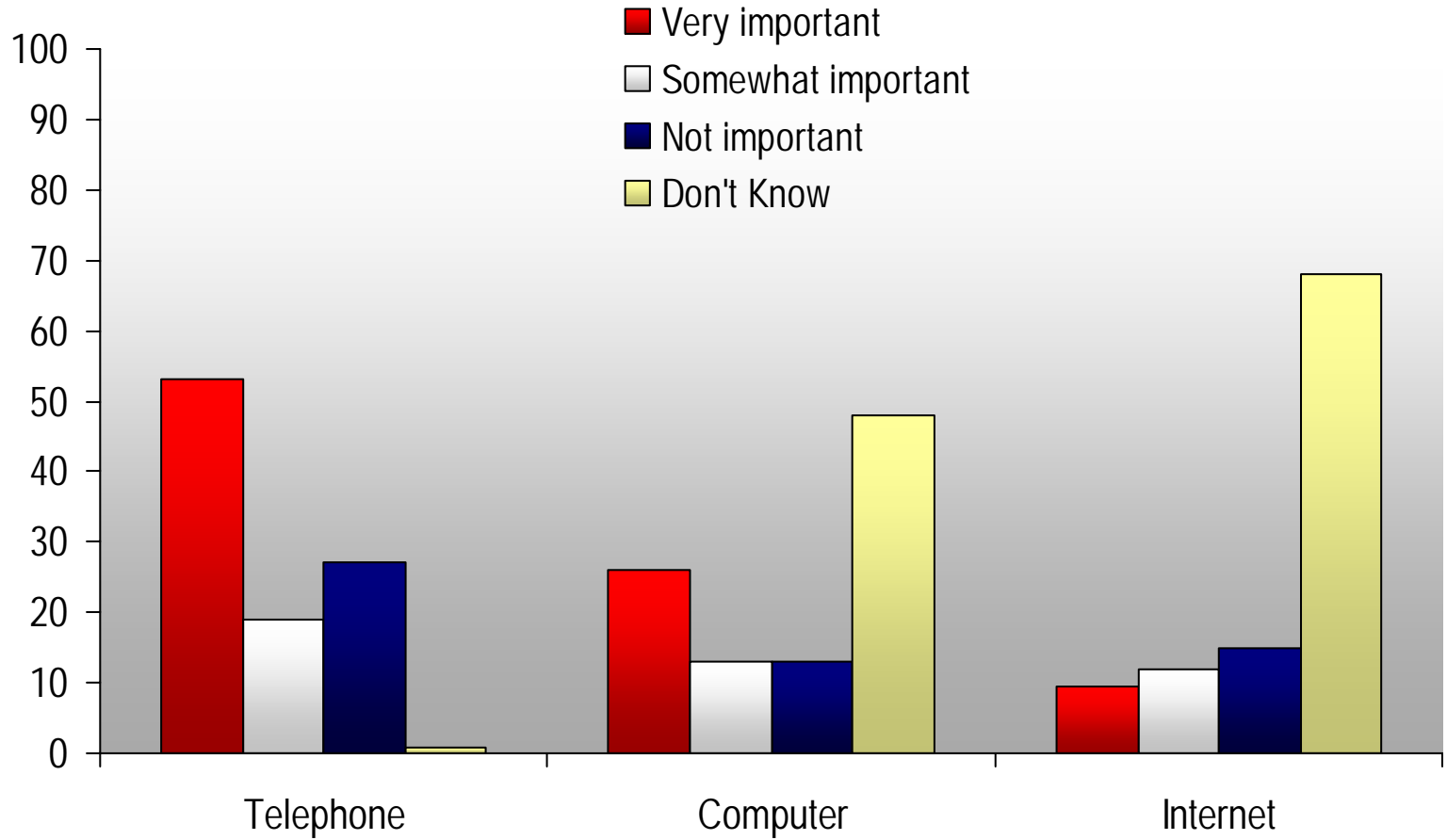

Language ability

Some basic information about our villages

Tamil reading ability by main occupation

This difference is significant at the .05 level

Awareness: how important are these services?

WHEN? The right tempo of content

Seasonality map prepared by men farmers

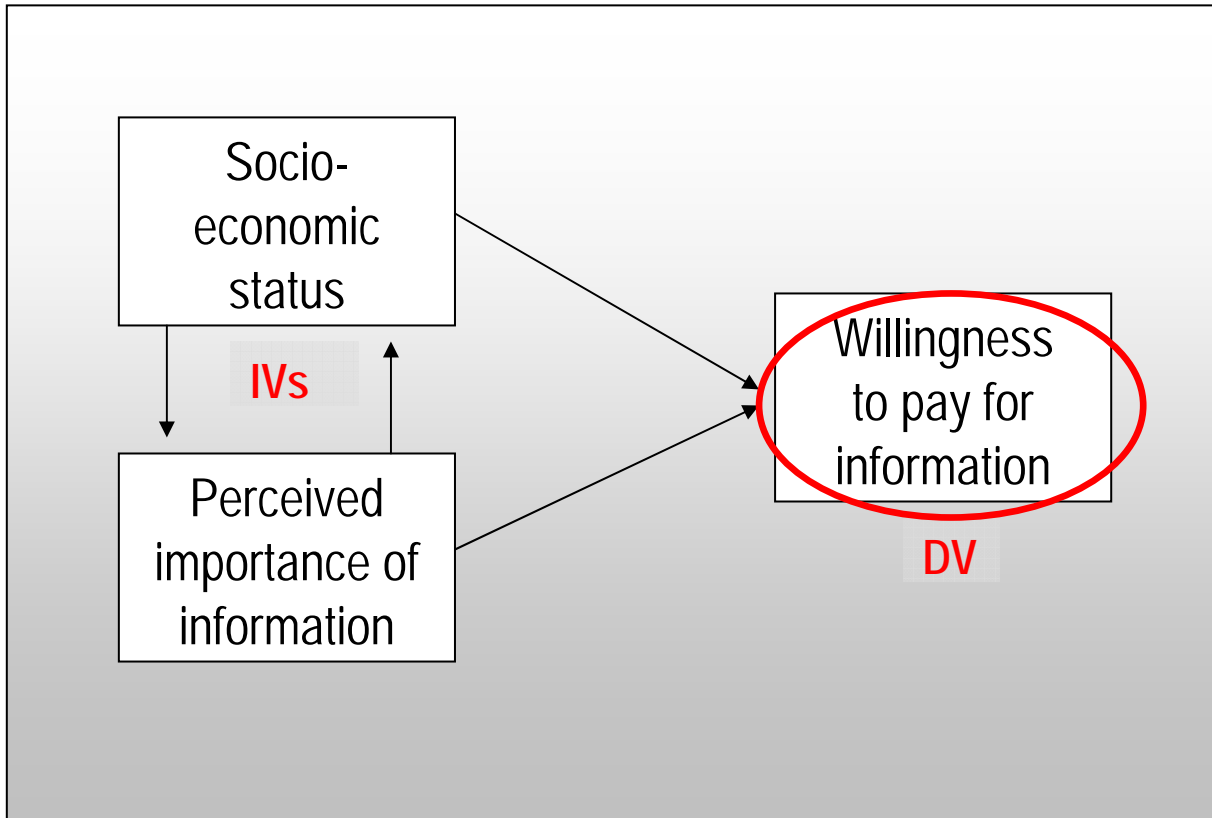| Chithrai	Vaigasi	Aani	Aadi	Aavani	Prutasi	Ipasi	Kartigai	Margazhi	Thai	Masi	Punguni
Blackgram harvest, Banana harvest, Intercropping in banana	Blackgram harvest continues	Desilting the irrigation canal	Delay in releasing water in the irrigation canals	Manuring banana plantation	Manuring paddy fields,	Flood affecting the crops	Planting support pole for banana	Problems to due to mist	Paddy harvesting	Information requirement	Banana harvest
Water scarcity	Banana plantation	Fallow phase		The harvested banana field are prepared for the next crop	Crop-paddy maintenance	Deepavali festival	Pest attack in paddy fields and banana fields		Sowing blackgram as second season crop	Information to increase the size of banana	Sowing gingily as intercrop
Strong wind blows the banana plants	Root worm, Root rot	Information requirement	Information requirement	Marriage month	Market details about Jasmine	Manuring the banana fields	Problem related to fertilization — cow and Kombri and Kalisal disease		Information requirement	Banana price details	Information requirement
Cattle — Kanal disease	Summer season paddy harvest	Details about soil testing-method, place and all other details	Details about good quality seed for different crops	Information requirement	Information requirement	Information requirement					Market details for banana
Temple festival	Temple festival			Details about the chemical fertilizer prices and dose	Details about pesticide and weed management	Way to borrow money to meet the economic crisis	Iyappa devotees pooja		Details about paddy harvester	Cultivating cotton as intercrop in Banana	Details about the availability of seeds
Information requirement	Information requirement		Market details about Jasmine and milk	Pest controlling methods in paddy					Details about cultivating intercrops in banana fields	Details to control 'sori noi' in coconut	
Market detail, of the banana, market for milk and price, milk producers society	Price and requirement details for blackgram and cotton in the market			Market details about Jasmine						Price details for coconut	
Way to borrow money to meet the economic crisis	Details about paddy harvester			Market details about Jasmine							
	Market details about Jasmine										

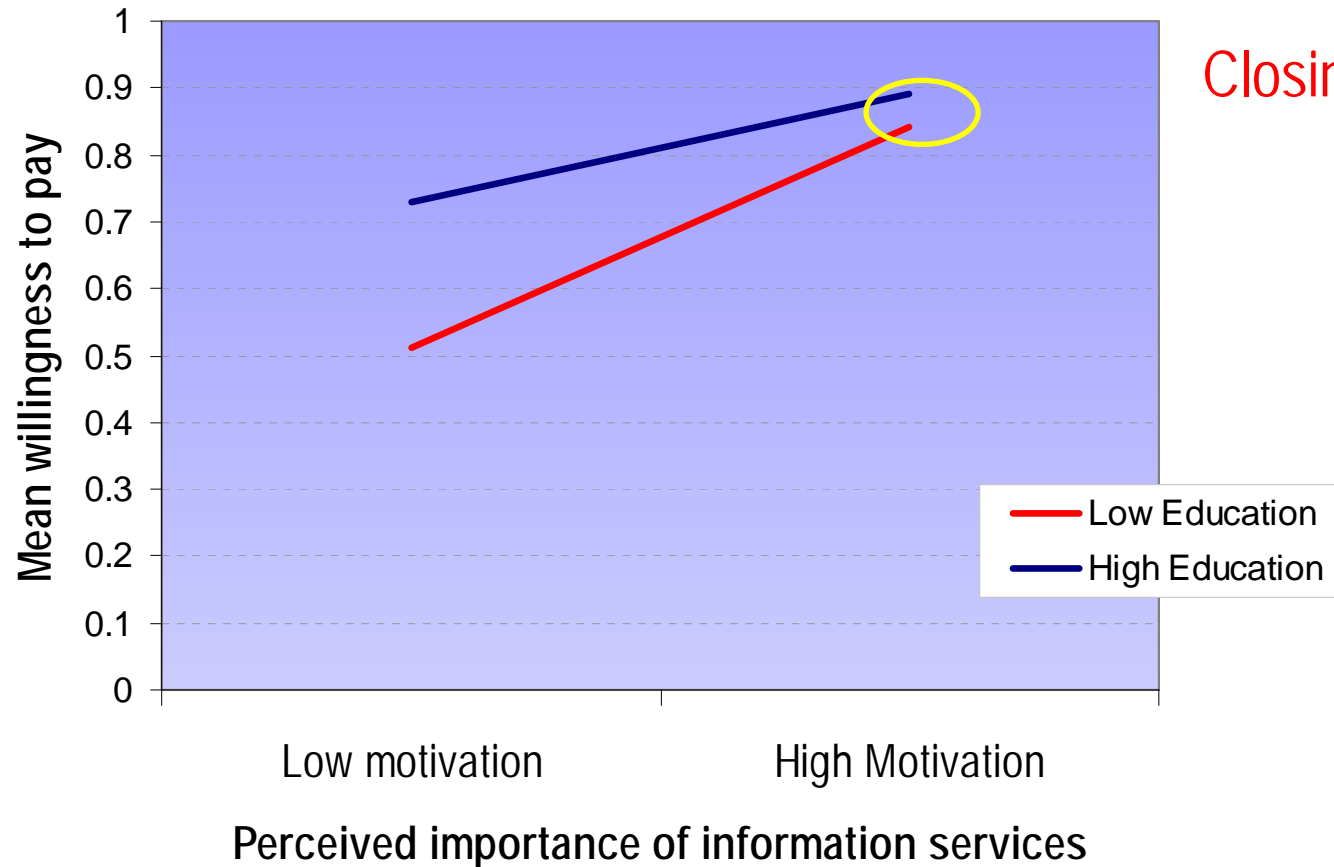# Going beyond: explaining willingness to pay

OUR HYPOTHESIS:

We predict that rural peasants, <u>independently of their socioeconomic status</u>, will be willing to pay for telecenter services if they find that these services are relevant to their lives

RELEVANCE ⟶ SUSTAINABILITY + ACCESS

Our model

Predicting demand for information in rural India

What made this research possible?

- The previous work of TANUVAS in the villages selected, and a good relationship with local leaders.

- Good rapport between social scientists in the US and academic veterinarians in India: a partnership

- Careful coordination and collaboration to set research objectives

- Intense training of research teams

Monitoring as a telecenter management tool

What is monitoring?

Monitoring means collecting data on an ongoing basis about different aspects of telecenter operations.

What kind of data?

Number of users, types of uses, characteristics of users, revenue generated, users' needs, etc., collected systematically by the telecenter manager

Monitoring as a telecenter management tool

Is it useful?

Monitoring data is useful for telecenter planning (services, awareness) and management (financial viability)

Monitoring should be part of a telecenter management routine

We need **tools**, **training**, **organization**

[Our work with Microsoft]

ARE MONITORING TOOLS EASIER TO STANDARDIZE SO THAT THEY CAN BE USED BY MANY?

Evaluation of telecenters: From potential to actuality

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF TELECENTERS ON DEVELOPMENT?

Scarcity of rigorous research evidence about telecenter impact

THREE PRESSING RESEARCH NEEDS (interrelated):

Social, economic, political **impact**

Factors that make equal **access** possible

Factors of financial and social **sustainability**

And how do we evaluate telecenters?

- **Theory-driven** research: conducive to productive replication and more coherent knowledge building in this area.

- **Longitudinal** research, not just one-shot surveys

- **Mix methods**: qualitative and quantitative

INVOLVE UNIVERSITIES AS A KEY PARTNER!

Example: Our current study in rural Latin America

CAN GOOD EVALUATION INFLUENCE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS?

An academic space for ICT4D research

Making it happen: The role of research in telecenters

- Fostering economically profitable and sustainable solutions

- Responding to the needs of current and potential users

- Designing socially sound programs, policies, and technologies

- Raising awareness about the *value* of ICT services in developing countries (potential users, government bodies, civil society, and the private sector).

SOME CHALLENGES:

Rigorous research approaches (*credibility, validity)*

Effective communication of results to different stakeholders

Utilizing research results

Start by asking…

WHO WILL DO IT (WITH WHO)?
HOW (METHODS)?
FOR WHAT AND WHO?

THANK YOU

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