

## ICT IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF INDIA

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**The future of India lies in its villages - Mahatma Gandhi**

### ABSTRACT

*Economic Development of a country depends upon various aspects and issues among various issues rural development has been an important issue. The socio-economic differences between rural and urban areas are increasing and creating tremendous pressure on the social and economic fabric of many developing countries. In this article effort has been made to examine the need for urban and regional planning practices to be further developed in the light of both emergence of information and in particular impact of information and communication technology,( ICT). The traditional media and new ICTs played a vital role in diffusing information to rural communities. Rural communities can be empowered through ICTs and give them a voice that permits them to contribute to the development process. With ICTs rural communities can acquire capacity to improve their living conditions and become motivated through training and dialogue with others to a level where they make decisions for their own development. This paper focuses on the ICT role for the solving of the problems of rural economy of India. Its main aim is to analyze the impact of ICT or technology on the rural growth and development.*

**Key words: Development, Communities, Technology, Information, Agriculture.**

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### I INTRODUCTION

Rural development has been receiving an increasing attention of the governments across the world. India is a country of villages and its development depends with development of the people living in rural areas. India is a second most populated country of the world but a large part of this population is leading uncertain economic life because fast growing population is non-synchronized employment opportunities in agricultural sector. In Indian context rural development assumes special significance for two important reasons. First about two thirds of population still lives in villages and there cannot be any progress as long as rural areas remain backward. Second, the backwardness of the rural sector would be a major impediment to the overall progress of the economy. India is an agrarian economy and farming is the main occupation of people although rural peoples are involved in traditional

agriculture means in terms of production, social organization and political mobilization rural sector is extremely backward. Moreover, technical developments in field of agriculture have been increased the gap between rich and poor. Thus rural area is almost backward in all aspects. The all India Rural Credit Review Committee in its report warned "If the fruits of development continue to be denied to the large sections of rural community, while prosperity accrues to some, the tensions social and economic may not only upset the process of orderly and peaceful change in the rural economy but even frustrate the national affords to set up agricultural production." It was therefore felt necessary to make arrangement for the distribution of fruits of development to the rural weak and backward section of society. Thus, we can say that rural areas often lack or lag behind urban areas in terms essential infrastructure and services such as transportation, health, education and government services. Rural isolation and deprivation can negatively impact and in the attainment of sustainable inclusive growth objective. ICTs can overcome with many infrastructural constraints. Though ICTs people of rural areas can connect with national economy. ICTs also serve as instrument of awareness creation and feedback giving rural people a voice in nation's socio-political life.

## **II ROLE OF ICTS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

1. ICTs Encouraging social Transformation by facilitating the flow of information and knowledge, beyond the border of social and economic status.
2. ICTs intensify efforts towards implementation of rural development initiatives through demand –driven information and communication services.
3. ICTs can help in strengthening Rural Governance by improving transparency, accountability and administrative efficiency of rural institutions.
4. ICT improves interaction with and within civil society and encourages civil society participation in rural governing process.
5. Application of ICT has the potential to improve living standards of people in remote and rural areas by providing important commercial, social and educational benefits.
6. ICT is regarded as one of the key elements in modernizing agriculture, in producing healthy, literate and trained workers for industry and for bringing about effective participation in national building activity.
7. ICT initiatives may be designed to provide support to local governance as well as to react to the queries generated by local needs of the rural communities.
8. As rural poor are not aware about of their rights and availability of government schemes, ICT can improve their access to the information they need.

### III ICT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Information technology now a day's emerging a key force for economic development and growth. Today Policy makers are focusing on making India a Digitalizing economy because Policy makers also recognized that digitalization can help the sustainable development of rural economy by impacting production, operation and expansion market and thus reshaping the rural economy. Information technology leads to:-

- a) Innovation
- b) Emergence of new market
- c) Job opportunities

As per digital report of Govt. of India, 2014, the share of internet economy is approximately, 5 percent of GDP.

**Table 1.1 Sectorial Contributions to Economic Growth**

| Sector                                      | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| GDP   | 6.69    | 4.47    | 4.86    | 4.6     | 7.5     |
| Agriculture and allied activities           | 5.02    | 1.42    | 4.64    | 4.8     | 3.8     |
| Industry                                    | 7.81    | 0.96    | 0.65    | 1.5     | 3.5     |
| Services                                    | 6.57    | 6.96    | 6.86    | 6.3     | 8.1     |
| ICT share in GDP (in percent)               | 6.4     | 7.5     | 8       | 5.2     | 4       |
| Internet users in rural areas (in millions) | 0.12    | 4       | 25      | 32      | 109     |
| Teledensity in rural areas                  | 26.43   | 33.79   | 39.22   | 9.07    | 41.02   |

Source: National Informatics Centre, data.gov.in

*It is evident from table 1.1 that growth of all sectors is not uniform . India's growth is primarily driven by the service sector and its showing increasing trend in table while the growth rate of agriculture and industry showing a declining trend between the years 2011-2015. This shows that ICT sector has contributed less to agriculture and industry as compared to service sector in terms of its uses and impact. Secondly, Internet and mobile users in India have increased two fold due to its development of its extensive network in rural areas. The number of internet users has increased from 0.12 million to 109 million during the period of 2011 to 2016. The share of teledensity in rural areas has also increased from 26.43 to 41.03 million during the same period. Thirdly, the table shows that share the*

share of informational technology in GDP has decreased from 6.4 percent to 4 percent in the period of 2011 to 2016. It was 5 percent of GDP in 2015. It can be concluded that ICT sectorial dominance within the economy in general and service sector in particular diminishing in a period 2011-2016. This is a sign of concern for policy makers as many researchers believed that there is positive correlation between growth and the growth rate of ICT industry.

#### IV POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACT OF ICT IN RURAL AREAS

Table 1.2 depicts the positive and negative effect of information Technology in rural areas.

| Positive Impacts of ICT Growth   | Negative impacts of ICT growth  |
|--|---|
| It can maintain electronic health records                              | Huge initial investment and transaction Costs   |
| Increase in healthcare data management                                 | Power Supply  |
| It has the potential to increase health care                           | Lack of training and awareness  |
| Potential to improve quality in health care                            | Under funding   |
| Use of ICT on health sector leads to achieve overall development goals | Limited investment priorities in providing access to new technology in health sector. |

#### V CHALLENGES OF APPLICATION OF ICT IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

- 1) Illiteracy: In India most of the people living in rural areas are illiterate than urban population. Literacy rate in rural areas stand at 68.90% whereas literacy rate in urban areas stand at 85.0%.
- 2) Poverty: In India most of the people are living under poverty condition and does great efforts for their daily living. To them accessing the internet is a costly issue for necessary communications in the form of installing the required telephone lines needed for internet or email access is similarly too exclusive in developing country.
- 3) Lack of Awareness: There is common lack of awareness concerning advantages of E-Governance as well as the process mixed up in executing successful G-C and G-B projects.
- 4) Infrastructure: There is acute shortage of required infrastructure like electricity, internet technology and methods of communications will influence the speed which postponed the implementation process.
- 5) Language Dominance: The dominance of English on the internet bounds access of non-English-speaking Population. In the case of India, mostly population does speak in Hindi.

- 6) Hesitate to revolutionize: People are disinclined to change. As e-governance means transform of the system from manual to computerize based, it is generally disliked by the employees and the general public. People generally hate it as they require learning new things in it for which they necessitate to give in additional time and effort.

## **VI CONCLUSION AND SUGESSTIONS**

Information Technology indirectly impacted the rural economy and helping in rural development which is major issue for developing countries like India . Analyses show that effective applications and channels have been used to benefit rural economy. However, it is important that the government should take more efforts to use of ICT in its development programmes. People of rural areas should be educated to use ICT effectively and efficiently. In order to have a stronger relationship between ICT and rural economy following points can be suggested:

- a) ICT should be used in such a way that it can improve the quality of life of rural people and can give more opportunities for employment creation. Thus ICT in rural areas should be employment oriented.
- b) ICT should be used in such a way that this brings transparency and accountability in various economical and social programs of government.
- c) There is a need to assess the needs of the rural people with regard to information technology i.e. linkage between demand and purpose of these services and product.
- d) Government should implement poverty eradication programmes so that rural people can take benefit of ICT facilities which they are deprived due to their poverty condition.
- e) Rural peoples must be educated so that they can become literate and accept the benefits of technology .

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