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Role of Internet and Computer in Rural Areas

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Abstract: *this paper reports trend of internet growth in both urban and rural India and mainly focuses on Internet impact in rural areas. This research found rural areas had lower level of internet access, compared to their counterparts. One of the best usages of the Internet is its ability to provide information about anything in the world quickly and cheaply. The 60 percent of Indians whose primary occupation is agriculture should be individually taught how to use internet and computers as a medium to improve their agricultural practices and use the technological advancement to the best of their interests.*

Keywords: *Computer, Internet, Rural Internet access, etc.*

INTRODUCTION

The Internet was first introduced in India by the government-owned agency, Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL), in August 1995. Internet services were initially largely a monopoly of the VSNL, and restricted to the four cities New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata (Fennell and Shailaja., 2016). India has over 10 billion people approximately 750 million people live in 637,000 villages in rural India with no internet connectivity. Internet connectivity would allow rural Indians the opportunity to achieve the economic status. Rural India's poor infrastructure results in undependable electricity and very low band width with disturbed internet connectivity which is the reasons for poor rural internet penetration. The case of India provides an important case study that shows how increased access to ICT can have very powerful impacts on improving economic opportunities and also of the very inimical consequences for rural areas that are increasingly marginalized through exclusion from the internet. While India has been a prominent player in the export of software exports, the diffusion of ICT remains at 15 percent (ITU, 2015). Connecting the Rural regions of the India to the Internet and use to computer have been a topic of significant research, where focus has been enable internet communication technologies particularly in rural areas. It is to make rural people know about knowledge of upcoming trends, business methodologies, and educational information. Access to the ICT has come to be regarded as an important measure of development. While measures of access show that rural areas are becoming connected there remains the matter of quality of connection, and here the digital divide remains a major characteristic that differentiates urban from rural areas (Akamai, 2016).

With the idea of setting up computer centers, one thing should be made very clear that all the inhabitants of the villages should get a fair chance to learn, discover and use this valuable invention in a constructive way for the betterment of their country and their own socio-economic and educational status. Every girl, every married or unmarried woman, widow, spinster, should be given an opportunity with some kind of compulsion to learn how to use computers and know what wonders can they do to their lives. Because the rural areas in India are still male dominated, hence the women along with the men should stand an equal chance to use and learn how to operate computers. Another great outcome of computer centers can be the management of mails and data for and by the citizens for all surveys and postal. Any important information can travel within a fraction of a second to the rural areas, adding to their benefits. They can also watch news channels and TV via Live TV or 3-G technology on the internet which will be a life-changing experience for those places in India who have lost all hope to get cable connection. Moreover, this can connect the rest of the world with local Panchayats once they have their very own websites.

Computer centers can change the rural infrastructure, education and standard of living dramatically, only if it is implemented and timely managed by people in authority, duly catering to any kind of problem and hindrance in communication and usage. The rural population should be forced and persuaded to use this technology to their benefit, which requires immense honesty on the policy formulators' part. The mere set up shall not do wonders. It will be the timely management and service to offer help and guidance to the rural areas, especially making it mandatory for women to participate under strict security, free from rural pressures and orthodox ideology of their family members. Because it is the women who are capable of carrying forward a great future for development; besides, they can benefit from it by taking healthcare tips and mutual discussions with and on internet under the able guidance of far away doctors and experts. With organizations now taking the plunge into rural technology and building businesses around it, the digital media revolution has already begun (Anonymous, 2011).

Fig: At present, rural Indians use the Internet mainly for Facebook, and for emailing.

Role of internet in rural areas:

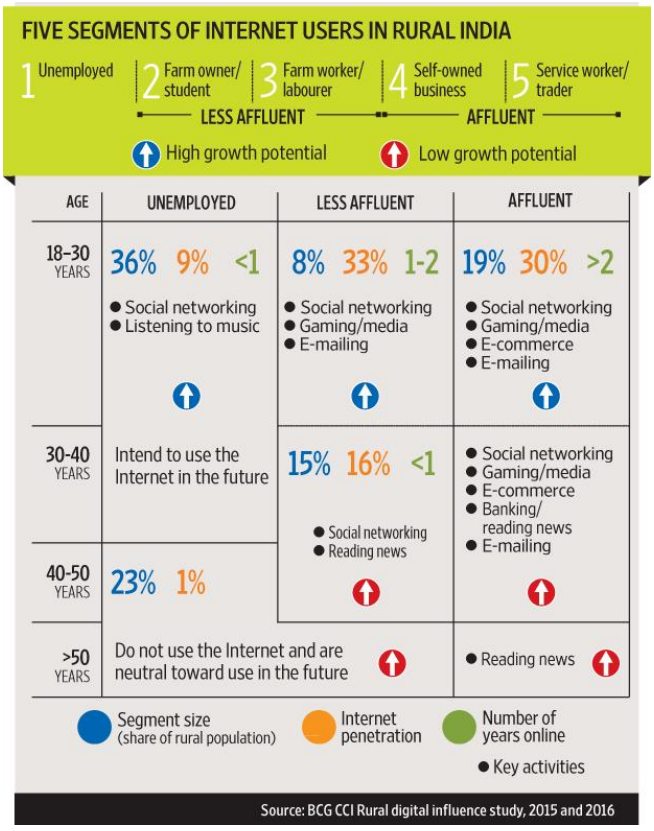
Use of broadband internet in rural India

One of the best usages of the Internet is its ability to provide information about anything in the world quickly and cheaply compared to other broadcasting methods. More sophisticated accessibility may reduce the costs of communication, transaction and other source information. Individuals insight of products and services would be more accurate when deal with improved information and knowledge.

Use of internet in rural areas for business

The rural businesses in their study were mainly manufacturing and retailing businesses that would fell into one of a number of e-commerce classifications. Traditional local business that could increase their market range status and sales service through e-commerce, virtual businesses. The businesses that used e-commerce basically reduce marketing inputs and costs; Most of the businesses used e-commerce method because, this would provide an opportunity for better increased profits and improved sustainability. This would help businesses in its product developments, inventory managements, manufacturing methods, marketing and sales techniques, finally in the customer service and relationship. Most of the businesses felt that e-commerce helps to their each and every operation (Goswami, 2013).

Internet uses in rural areas in India



Role of Computer in Rural Areas:

1.The earliest recognition of the potential of computers in rural development inIndia came through applied research of some academics during 1975-80 (Patel 1979). A general awareness of the utility of computers was created in the bureaucracy through seminars and training programs (CSI 1981).
2.Some districts were using microcomputers to produce IRDP monthly reports. An interesting application in the health sector was developed at a primary health center training school located in a tahsil. In this project a PC was used to store data on the couples in the reproductive age in the tahsil.
3.The system demonstrated how monitoring a program could be more effective once access to detailed data was available.
4.The system also allowed supervisors to develop detailed activity plans for workers outlining which couples should be targeted in a given period (Bhatnagar and Patel 1988).
5.A few districts used a PC for monitoring stocks in their public distribution system.

Government of India Program for District-Level Computerization

Rajiv Gandhi came to power in 1985, the government of India decided to force the pace of IT use at the district level. The National Informatics Centre (NIC), a central government department was chosen to implement a national program called District Information System of National Informatics Centre (DISNIC) to computerize all district offices for which free hardware and software was offered to states (Planning Commission 1989). In a separate program called Computerized Rural Information Systems Project (CRISP), the rural development ministry and NIC collaborated to develop software for planning and monitoring of IRDP (Department of Rural Development 1987).

In the CRISP program, there were a few elements of decentralization. Purchases of hardware and training of district level functionaries were left to state initiative. No personnel were provided to district DRDAs. However, the design of the software which included the assessment of required information specifying the type of databases, and the reporting system were all centralized.

Impact of DISNIC and CRISP on Rural Development Programs

1.Commissioning nearly 500 computer centers and a country-wide network connecting these computers was a major achievement. Considering that some district headquarters are significantly away from large cities where most computer vendors are located, maintenance and support of the equipment is reported to be satisfactory.
2.The impact of CRISP and DISNIC on administration has been marginal because the task of changing the administrative culture is enormous.
3.IT can be a tool for decentralized planning, integration across departments and reduction in work load, it cannot be the sole instrument of change. Unless district administrators are motivated or held accountable to improve performance of rural development program, they will not try a new tool. In CRISP and DISNIC the effort required to push administrative reforms through the use of IT was grossly underestimated. (Subhash Bhatnagar,1999).

Constraints of Internet and Computer for Rural Areas:

In rural areas of India due to the following problems it is not feasible to provide computer education in these areas.

1.Lack of infrastructure (building, furniture, computing resourses)
2.Poor power supply
3.Lack of skilled man power

CONCLUSIONS

Increasing the effectiveness of rural development programs is a complex task. The administration has to be energized to face up to the challenge and implement development programs with honesty and vigor. The rural poor need to be educated and organized to make demands on the administrative system. In all information technology and development: foundation and key issues these areas information technology can play only a supportive role. In design and implementation of applications, field officials must get a sense of involvement and a sense of ownership.

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