

Information and communication technology and rural development in India

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ABSTRACT

Deployment of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in Asian rural societies has to be viewed as a process marked by promises, opportunities, ironies and complexities. It is important to provide critical analyses of the impacts of communication technologies including computers, Internet, radio, TV, mobile phones, etc. Community activists, citizen groups and donor - dependent NGOs have initiated a bewildering variety of social experiments, which, based on ICT, particularly the Internet, claim to enhance employment opportunities, generate income streams for alleviating poverty, empower subaltern classes such as da/ its. Information and Communication technologies (ICTs) are increasingly seen as an essential tools in development projects that can create new sources of income, make governments more transparent and accessible, improve education and health care, and overcome social exclusion and discrimination. E-Commerce is broadly defined as 'a process where electronic connections facilitate economic transactions various parties in the value chain'. India is the second fastest growing economy in the world, Much of the Indian growth is attributed to the rapid expansion of the export oriented ICT sector.

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Information Communication Technologies and development ICTD had emerged as an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the multidimensional impacts of ICT diffusion, resistance and acceptance in developing societies. Where is the evidence on the relative benefits of investment in ICT infrastructure compared to education, health, roads and dams, and industrial parks. Deployment of ICT in Asian rural societies has to be viewed as a process marked by promises, opportunities, ironies and complexities. It is important to provide critical analyses of the impacts of communication technologies including computers, Internet, radio, TV, mobile phones, etc. based on research, teaching and outreach related-to ICTs and socio-economic development in Asian countries. ICT contributed to the enhancement of the capabilities of the participants of the rural network society through improved access to state programmes, or market initiatives of MNCS or NGOs in health and education sectors. Has, the coverage and reach of poverty alleviation programmes, literacy programmes,

health care programmes, etc. increased as a result of enhanced use of ICT. Strategic and technological impacts of ICT expansion are significant from the angle of information innovations as well understanding the dynamics of rural network societies. There has been near equivocal consensus among policy makers as well as governmental and non- governmental agencies that new technologies, particularly information and communication technologies can be put to effective use the design outreach and delivery of poverty alleviation programmes. The strategic significance of ICT in poverty alleviation programmes is recognized by international organizations and, consequently, there has been emphasis on a few focus areas such as integration of ICT into poverty reduction in strategies related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), leveraging on ICT for regenerating or creating livelihood systems for the poor, developing local entrepreneurship, and in designing or programmes for social inclusion. Consequently, in the last decades or so there has been a massive proliferation of ICT-based anti-poverty initiatives in Asia and elsewhere. Assessing the impact of these experiments, would provide some understanding of the prospects, possibilities and constraints in leveraging ICT for poverty alleviation in Asia. ICT initiatives in Asia appeared at a time when a new set of beliefs about ICT expansion had become a powerful global discourse. A groupthink of techno -

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