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Changing Scenario of Employment Generation in Rural Areas: By Using ICT in Education

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ABSTRACT: This paper examines the prospects for rural areas within the information society, referring particularly to the European Union experience. The next round of agricultural growth offers a huge potential for welfare enhancement provided the policies are robust enough to bring a paradigm shift in the manner in which the expected growth in productivity is to be achieved the conventional source of productivity enhancement, especially since the green revolution, has centred input incentive practices. The challenge now is to shift towards knowledge / employment intensive systems of agricultural production. Achieving this would require a more nuanced approach, which incorporate differential agro-ecological features on the one hand and employment livelihood needs on the other. The diminishing effects of distance from core markets and enhancing the learning capacities of rural areas by improving access to relevant information. While acknowledging the many problems associated with the urban locations, such as congestion and social exclusion, the particular obstacles inhibiting the development of rural areas are highlighted. The potential with the new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) offer such areas for overcoming the negative effects of distance from core markets is explored, while downplaying the exaggerated claims for the 'death of distance'. Because of the particular problems of rural areas, the European Union (EU) to date placed considerable emphasis on examining how ICTs might facilitate rural development strategies. The effects of distance, accessibility and remoteness have already been alluded to Rural Areas are characterized by a number of interacting factors while militate against expanding employment opportunities which would absorb people moving out of farming and would help to maintain a stable demographic and community structure. Recent EU policy developments have attempted to help rural areas diversify their economy as agriculture becomes less significant in employment terms. Such diversification involves the promotion of activities such as tourism, which allows the exploitation of the rural environment in ways which connect small regions with the demand of the international market place. The main role of ICTs is facilitating such developments must be seen in a very broad sense, as a means of raising levels of competence and competitiveness in all branches of the local economy. Although the new technologies are no substitute for entrepreneurship, the potential they present, within a more enlightened policy environment, should not be underestimated.

Keywords: Information Society, Rural Areas, EU Policy, ICTs

I. INTRODUCTION

The recent policy discourse in India is marked by unequivocal emphasis on revival of growth in agricultural sector. This is mainly due to the significant poverty reducing impact of the sector. While a large part of the poverty reduction impact had been realized mainly in areas covered by the early phase of green revolution, a similar phenomenon has been observed during the eighties in the some of the agriculturally lagging states such as West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan (Bhalla and Singh, 2000). This period starting with the early eighties, thus marked a turning point in India's agriculture with an unprecedented growth of 3.5 percent per annum, and a relatively better regional spread. However, the growth moments could not sustain during the nineties. This, once again, has brought Indian agriculture to a cross road deciding the new path will have an overarching impact on the future of Indian economy and also of millions of Indians in the times to come. Declaration in agricultural growth during the nineties had led to two major policy implications. First, it reinstated multiple roles that the sector plays not only in terms of employment, poverty reduction, and food security for the large masses in rural areas, but also for sustaining the higher level of overall economic growth in the country (Majumdar 2006; Radhakrishna, 2002). And second it brought concerns like environmental sustainability, gender equity and value addition of the center stage of policy formulation.

One finds a sense of urgency among policy makers for attaining the targeted rate of growth, if not for attaining other important goals, viz; sustainability and equity. The recent revival of emphasis on agricultural growth is a matter of necessity rather than changing composition of agricultural growth, notwithstanding the need for increasing demand in the economy. This is reflected by the fact that the demand gap is to be met mainly by creating wage incomes through various employments. *Gujarat Institute of Development Research, Ahmedabad.*

The next round of agricultural growth offers a huge potential for welfare enhancement provided the policies are robust enough to bring in a paradigm shift in the manner in which the expected growth in productivity is to be achieved. The conventional source of productivity enhancement, especially since the green revolution, has centred input intensive practices. The challenge now is to shift towards knowledge/ employment intensive systems of agricultural production. Achieving this incorporate differential agro-ecological features on the one hand and employment livelihood needs on the other.

The new mantra for economic survival is now rooted through skill inventory possessed by a Nation. Skills and knowledge are the driving forces of economic growth and social development for any country. Countries with higher and better level of skills adjust more effectively to the challenges and opportunities of world of work. When India is aiming to achieve double digit economic growth, the preparation for sustaining overall high growth has become the core issue. Rapid globalization, changes in technology as well as work processes, market dynamics together creates a very challenging picture for coming years. Clearly witnessed from the current situation as reduction has been getting globalized and financial markets the world over are becoming integrated. Information technology has become the backbone for almost all the growth factors which is not only acting as an instrument in increasing the speed of communications but significantly has helped in taking fast and more reliable decisions reducing and reduction in costs. (IT) Information Technology is the need of the current situation to bring out a change in agriculture and rural employment. India, which is on the world map of one of the fastest growing nations, experiencing very fact technological changes, shorter product cycles and news forms of work organization which in turn alters the entire working environment. To match up with such pace, the knowledge and education of information technology becomes vital. In this paper, the importance and need of information technology is highlighted which leads to economic growth and employment expansion. In fast moving pace, the knowledge of technology enables one to meet up the current demands of the society and upto date with all the reliable information to keep oneself moving.

Information And Communication Technology (ICT) –

Information Technology (IT) is the application of computers to store, study, retrieve, transmit and manipulate data or information, often in the context of a business or other enterprise. IT is considered a subset of information and communication technology (ICT). The term is commonly used as a synonyms for computers and computer networks, but it also encompass other information distribution technologies such as television and telephones. Several industries are associated with information technology, including computer hardware, software, electronics, semi conductors, internet, telecom equipment and e-commerce.

The definition of IT consists of three categories -

- Techniques for processing
- The application of statistical and mathematical methods to decision making and
- The simulation of higher order thinking through computer program.

Various tools of ICT used in our everyday life :-

Factors	Usage	Tools
Education	Find useful information to manage books in the library	Internet Library automation system
Banking	To withdraw money On line banking	ATM Machine to check anytime, anywhere
Industry	Automobile manufacturing industry eg: Car, Aerospace research	Robotic and Artificial Intelligence High Tech Machine – Supercomputers
Commerce	Buying and Selling form Internet for advertising for stock market	On line payment Billboard, electronic media KLSE

Usage of ICT in Everyday Life

From ICT to Multimedia –

Information and Communication Technologies consists of an ever expanding array of interrelated technologies involved in information processing and transmission. The most significant development to date has been the convergence between computer technology and telecommunications, giving rise to interconnected computer networks globally, making possible the decentralization of certain activities not requiring face to face contact. During the second half of the 1990s a new electronic communication system was formed out of a merger of globalized, customized media and computer mediated communication. This new system is characterized by the integration of different media and by its interactive potential into the whole domain of life from home to work, from schools to hospitals, from entertainment to travel.

Interactive Use of ICT –

Interactive learning is a valuable tool for self learning and professional development. It is an outstanding resource that can help pupils to develop skills lively and in fruitful ways. It allows information to be presented using a wide range of resources, which can then be annotated to clarify and refine understanding. It can facilitate explanation of models, accommodate ideas, theories and understanding the concepts. Pupils can use the technology to present ideas in exciting and dynamic ways. ICT allows pupils to interact with the new learning that is being demonstrated as well as providing a valuable tool to understand models, abstract ideas and concepts.

Connecting Rural Areas to ICT –

Because of the particulars problems of rural areas, the European Union (EU) to date has placed considerable emphasis on examining how ICTs might facilitate rural development strategies. The effects of distance, accessibility and remoteness have already been alluded to. Recent EU policy developments have attempted to help rural areas diversify their economy as agriculture becomes less significant in employment terms. Such diversification involves the promotion of activities, which allows the exploitation of the rural environment in ways which connect small regions with the demand of the international market place. The main role of ICTs in facilitating such developments must be seen in a very broad sense, as a means of raising levels of competence and competitiveness in all branches of the local economy. The technology should never be regarded as a substitute for a well thought out strategy for promoting enterprise. Telecommunications infrastructure is highly developed in urban areas. Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) is mainly limited to urban areas. This infrastructure employs digital lines and switches increasing band width and reliability and provides access to three important services; fast file transfer, video conferencing and group 4 high resolution, high speed faxes. Local call charge access to the internet is also quite limited in the rural areas being confined to the larger urban centres.

Rural Development Strategies -

In formulating Rural Development strategies a useful emphasis has emerged in EU Policy statements on the role of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) within the indigenous sector. Small scale rural economics can be usefully conceptualized in terms of such SMEs. Enhancing the competence of such enterprises through training in management, marketing and the wide range of skills required for developing enterprises in rapidly changing and increasingly international markets, should be an essential element of rural development strategies. Increasing awareness and the provisions of training relating to exploiting the new ICTs is the necessary starting point of such technologies are to play a significant role in rural development.

Evidence from Economic Census (EC) shows that in rural Gujarat during 1998 to 2005, the unorganized non-agricultural enterprises increased in terms of numbers as well as employment there was a higher concentration of non agricultural establishment in urban areas both with regards to the number of units and workers employed, while a large share of OAEs were located in the rural areas. Unlike the 1990s, the numbers of OAEs (Own Account Enterprise) and employment was expanding in the period under consideration (1998-2005). Concentration of OAEs is also for greater in urban Gujarat then rural, though in rural areas the share of OAEs is more than the Establishments.

While basic literacy is a must, Skills Development of the youth is important for the holistic growth of the country.

Madhya Pradesh - The Skill Development Initiatives –

Keeping the current scenario in mind, the state government is under the process of launching skill development policy soon. The government has formed a subcommittee for minister and based on their recommendations which the cabinet will consider the suggestions and will announce a policy. The government has also set up an independent council to take care of the vocational training and skill related initiatives under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister named as Madhya Pradesh Council for vocational training (MPCVET).

The organization has been established with following laid down objectives –

- To plan and execute skill development programs to prepare youth for self employment and various jobs available in Industrial and service sectors.
- To develop competency based curricula, and to train and certify school dropouts, labour working in unorganized sector, service sector and unskilled workers engaged in various industries.
- To prepare need based training programs of different levels as per the requirement of various groups industrial sectors, which are recognition at national and international level and also to recognize such programs for further education.

- To develop a flexible delivery mechanism to impart training in part time, weekends, full time, onsite / offsite mode.
- To plan and monitor National Skill Development Policy at state level.
- To frame policy and programs to link non-formal vocational training with the formal education system and to develop system of recognizing prior acquired learning.
- To coverage and develop available training resources in the state through public private partnership.
- To provide access to vocational education and training with inclusive growth for all the groups of the society.
- To provide training of trainers to promote innovation in training and also to render consultancy services.
- To award certificates, diplomas and other distinctions to trained manpower and set norms for quality and standards of vocational training system.
- To affiliate institutes as vocational training providers on payment of prescribed fee.
- To forecast the needs of skilled manpower to cater to the needs of various stakeholders in the state on regular basis.
- To award scholarship, prizes and medals in accordance with the rules.
- To fix and demand such fees and other charges as may be laid down under the rules of society.
- To establish maintain and manage the land, building, other infrastructure and assets of the society for institutional purpose.
- To create with the prior approval of state government administrative, technical, ministerial and other posts under the society and to make appointments.
- To interact and co-operate with any educational institute, training organization and industrial organization having objects wholly and partly similar to those of the society.
- To develop continuing education programs for the personal in the organized and unorganized sectors.
- To establish network with other similar organization for exchange of expertise, information/ documents and publication.

The **National Skill Development Workshop** with the same initiative the Govt. of MP has organized a National Skill Workshop at Bhopal on September 1, 2010 to make ground for new policy for technical education, training and skill development in the state. Representative from various National and Local Industry Association, World Bank, National Skill Development Corporation and various experts from the field have participated in the workshop and put forth their valuable suggestions for new policy of skill development in the state. The cabinet sub-committee for Technical Education and few other ministers have also attended the workshops. This was one among the key initiatives towards skill sufficient state.

ICT in Education in India -

There is a going awareness building among the educationist, stake holders, administrators and policy makers on the emerging role of ICT in enhancing the process and outcome of education.

1. The National Policy on education 1986, as modified in 1992 stressed on the need of educational technology to improve the quality of education.
2. The National Curriculum Frame work (NCF) for School Education (2000) rightly remarked, 'the new technology has a tremendous potential to revolutionize education and transform school dramatically. ' The NCF (2005) also highlighted the significant role of ICT in school education.
3. The 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' (SSA) a mission of the Indian Govt. to achieve the UEE, also stresses the importance of ICT in educational sector.
4. The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) also in its report on Universal Secondary Education - 2005 featured the comprehensive use of ICT as one of the most important aspects of schooling.
5. The beaming educational programmes to satellite was first introduced in our country during the year 1975-76 through the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE). The vital aim of the INSAT is to bring the rural people into the national mainstream.
6. The Government of India launched the Computer Literacy and Studies in School. (CLASS) Project.
7. The Project was adopted as a centrally sponsored scheme during the VIII Plan : 1993-98 (MHRD).
8. The UGCs Higher Educational Television Project (HETV) / Countrywide Classroom Programme was launched in 1984 to upgrade the quality of education in the country and the production of programmes was done by the Electronic Media Research Centres (EMRC) located at different locations in our country.
9. The Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12) has emphasized the importance of ICT in Education. The first Inter Ministerial National Consultation on drafting the National Policy on ICT in School Education was held on the 13th Feb. 2008 under the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and the Department of Higher Education launched in compendium of Feedback entitled 'Towards a National Policy on ICT in School Education in India.' A Multi -Stakeholder perspective in 2008. According to the revised draft on

National Policy on Information Communication Technology in school (MHRD, 2011) the aims of the policy are to devise, catalyze, support and sustain ICT and ICT enabled activities and processes in order to improve access, quality and efficiency in the school system.

II. CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to outline the prospects for rural areas within the information society. These prospects have been assessed in terms of diminishing the effects of distance from core markets. The prospects can also be considered in terms of the potential of rural areas exploiting the new technologies in order to enhance their learning capacity by improving their access to relevant information. A growing awareness of the need to give much more attention to the social dimension of the information society is necessary. As basic literacy is the must, Skill Development of youth is necessary for the holistic growth of the country. Revival of integrated farming system approach across different agro-ecological region thus becomes an essential pre-condition for achieving a paradigm shift in the sector. A shift such as this may help creating additional employment and at the same time, ensure better remuneration for the workers to sustain their livelihood in the long run. The application of Information and communication technology (ICT) will enable to increase the knowledge of the youth and skill development for a better enhancement of their competence and competitiveness in all branches of local economy. ICT has tremendous potentialities to revolutionize the educational process. Its infusion in the teaching learning process can develop new skills and knowledge among the learners. The policy formulation in India has thus taken a full circle where need to strengthen synergy between agriculture growth and employment, aims at 'inclusive' growth during the 11th Five Year Plan.

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