Empowering Economy Through ICT: A Case Study of Kashmir Valley

Muheet Ahmed Butt, Majid Zaman

Abstract— **The beautiful valley of Kashmir is situated at such a place on the global map which puts several disadvantages for its overall economic and social development. The place is full of naturally occurring odds and impedances which need to be resolved by developing relevant strategies which will provide it with distinctive advantages. Besides, all these odds the Almighty has bestowed Kashmir with other advantages which need to be capitalized as has been done in most of the developed nations around the globe having same type of climatic conditions and natural recourses. All of the governments that have ruled the valley have been introducing several schemes for the economic welfare of the common people but mostly they are not up to the mark and because of that don't meet the necessary goals. The proposed research provides an insight to the various potential areas of Kashmir which can be influenced to a great extent by the application of the Information Communication Technology practices.**

Index Terms— **Kashmir, ICT, Technology.**

I. INTRODUCTION

The attainment of every successful business depends on various factors which are accurate analysis, choosing the right technology and the future vision. We have learnt from the past decades that those industries that invest in science & technology and choose the path of novelty have made a substantial growth in business. Information Communication Technology [1][2] is the only technology which provides one with the prospect to analyze the data generated by business and plan ahead so that failure is minimized. It also provides you many tools which can solve various complex problems of business and plan the scalability of your business at every level. The technologies like the cloud computing and modern communication capabilities have enabled us to form a global village for business community, manage and monitor its virtual shops and services all over the globe and much more. In valley the business units are mostly owned and managed by abstemiously educated illiterate personnel. They lack the professionalism involved in the business and cannot work in a belief of competition. They have petite exposure and almost meager requisite information about the business they are in. Most of the decisions taken by them from time to time are wrong and result in enormous losses rather than in high profits. This has made most of the well educated people from

Muheet Ahmed Butt, Scientist, PG Department of Computer Sciences, University of Kashmir, J&K, India
Majid Zaman, Scientist, Directorate of IT and SS, University of Kashmir, J&K, India

established Kashmir business community to opt for Government services rather than involving in business. Therefore Government policies need to be designed in such a manner that the educated people are also attracted as well as involved in the business and on the other hand sufficient support is provided to the little or uneducated persons also to run their business in a well-defined manner.

In the proposed research we have identified certain business areas and ventures which have influenced the valley since many years of its development and are responsible for sustainable economy of the valley. These include industries like Horticulture, Handicrafts, Tourism, education etc. In the proposed research we have also proposed the role of Information Communication Technology [3][4] in uplifting of such industries. The said research has been carried out under the able leadership of Late Dr (Er) Mehraj ud Din Dar, Director IT & SS, University of Kashmir, Srinagar and the proposed work is dedicated to his contribution in the development of IT infrastructure of the University of Kashmir.

II. ROLE OF ICT ON HORTICULTURE

The Horticulture as per the government estimates generates revenue thousands of crores from fresh fruits and about crores of rupees from the dry fruits involving maximum number of Kashmiri families. The government has introduced the market intervention scheme and some other facilities in the sector to help the business grow but there is a good scope to develop it further.

The Information Communication Technology can be effectively utilized for this industry in the monitoring the flow of fruits as well as in the support for the marketing. The recommendations for the Information Centres are as under:

- The government bodies need to establish information centers at district levels or in the fruit complexes as well as in all the main markets in India.
- These centers should not only provide comprehensive information but also generate a sense of competition among the growers, dealers in this business commissioning agents.
- The Information Centers at the marketing centers would be feeding the following information on daily basis.
- Based on the above information the following reports may be generated daily, weekly as well as at the end

of the year. This type of information needs to be given wide publicity among the growers and need to be advised accordingly.

III. ROLE OF ICT ON HANDICRAFTS

Handicrafts have been our one of the fundamental sources of the revenue and it too feeds lakhs of families in the valley. Its turnover per year is manifold than all other sources of revenue. It is the inherent strength of this craft that is keeping the trade alive under the fiercest possible competition. The Government of J & K as usual has been giving certain incentives from time to time to the traders in this field to ensure that the business flourishes. As is true with horticulture mere incentives are not going to strengthen the fundamentals of this business but it needs modernization so that it is capable of competing in the international market and also provides substantial benefits to the people involved at all the levels.

The ICT can play its role both in the manufacturing as well as in the marketing of the Handicrafts and the necessary recommendations are as under:

➢ The most important of all the steps in this industry is to provide supporting system to the manufacturers in producing quality and attractive designs in addition to the conventional designs which we have been producing since centuries.

➢ The computer graphics is one of the potential areas of the Information Technology which can be used to develop wonderful designs for Carpets and other textile industry.

➢ Providing worldwide awareness to these Handicrafts through Internet and also providing buying and selling platforms for the same.

IV. ROLE OF ICT ON TOURISM

Tourism is the most profitable area among all the trades presently running in the Valley. Like other trades the tourism sector also can be highly benefited by the introduction of the Information Communication Technology and the recommendations are as under:

➢ Setting up of Tourism Information Centers accessible 24X7 from anywhere in the world.

➢ Establishment of comprehensive e-commerce based website about the tourism also needs to be developed which could bring all the stake holders connected with tourism on a single window or platform.

➢ The tourists must be provided the online facility for booking the rooms in different hotels acquire full list of facilities provided in these hotels.

➢ The Tourism Department must also maintain a complete database of all the tourists who visit the Valley along with the remarks about their experience here. This database must be processed by

the tourism department and proper feed can be obtained to develop the facilities for its development.

V. ROLE OF ICT ON EMPLOYMENT:

Employment is another important area where ICT can play some significant role. One of the most difficult problems faced by our educated youths in getting jobs outside the state in reputed organizations is the lack of proper information about their recruitment policies, dates of recruitment and so on.

The biggest leap in this step is the setting up of employment exchanges need to be modernized to meet the present day requirements. The Internet has made it possible to access any organization and collect any kind of information from them. The main features of these centers should be:

➢ The Information Centre should have a high speed internet connectivity.

➢ These employment centers should adapt to changes and function in requsite changing scenarios.

➢ The Employment centers should create a database of all the unemployed persons with comprehensive curriculum vitae's.

➢ They should remain in constant touch with the organizations offering employment and mail the relevant candidates curriculum vitae's to them.

➢ These centers should also arrange their interview preferably using video conferencing facilities.

➢ These employment centers should also monitor the requirements in the market and accordingly segregate the enrolled candidates who can be upgraded to meet these requirements with minimum efforts.

➢ The employment exchanges should also arrange special lectures for the candidates appearing in the interviews to infuse confidence in them and prepare them for facing the interviews.

VI. ROLE OF ICT ON EDUCATION

It is the age of information and knowledge. Societies possessing these assets are progressing very well even if they do not have natural resources. The countries like Japan are an example. Special attention has to be given to this sector as it is going to make the fundamentals of the ICT strong in the society.

The ICT infrastructure in all the educational institutions needs to be developed and students need to be given requisite education of ICT. access to variety of learning resources. In addition to that the ICT Practices can provide the following advantages which include:

➢ The ICT will provide immediacy to information with anytime learning, anywhere learning and collaborative learning

> ➢ The multimedia approach to education could bring all the stake holders together in a virtual environment providing authentic and up to date information.
> ➢ There can be instant access to online libraries making teaching of different subjects made interesting.
> ➢ A huge knowledge of educational data storage could be established for efficient learning and providing education in a distance mode.

CONCLUSION

At the end it can be concluded that serious thought has to be given towards the modernization of our various sectors. The government can set up a committee of ICT experts which can advise it from time to time in different ICT related projects. This way the chances of failures of different ICT missions would be minimized and full advantage of it can be taken. Considering the fact that for over all development better governance, transparency, strong communication and better monitoring is required therefore ICT has a significant role in all these activities. Any laxity in the proper implementation of ICT is bound to cost dearly to the development of the State.

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