**INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY HELPS FOR BETTERMENT OF RURAL PEOPLE’S LIFESTYLE**

**by**

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ICT means Information Communication Technology. Information and communications technology (ICT) is an extensional term for information technology (IT) that stresses the role of unified communications and the integration of telecommunications (telephone lines and wireless signals) and computers, as well as necessary enterprise software, middleware, storage and audiovisual, that enable users to access, store, transmit, understand and manipulate information. Components of ICT are people, Data , Hardware , Software , Procedure , Information. ICT works on the basis of some inputs then processing the inputs and give a optimum output. This ICT not only help to the urban area and industries it also was introduced to rural are for betterment of their living standard and

In an era of rapid technological change, a country’s competitiveness and relevance in the global economy is increasingly determined by its capacity to effectively use information for design, production and marketing (Dzidonu, 2002). A growing mode of delivery in this environment is by information and communication technologies (ICTs)that can provide vital access to information and to markets by connecting the rural poor and marginalised sections to the world’s information resources and opportunities. Although the use of ICTs remains concentrated largely in the developed world, a rapid growth in information technologies has now been taking place in developing countries and agriculture . The necessity of developing the agricultural capacity to generate and disseminate knowledge and exploit it as a powerful tool to derive societal transformation .

ICT has bought tremendous improvement in rural areas. Information is the key to democracy. With the advent of Information Technology (IT), it has become possible for common man to access global information.

Before the introduction of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Indian agriculture, the sector faced various challenges and limitations that hindered its efficiency and productivity. Here are some key aspects of the Indian agriculture scenario before ICT was widely adopted:

1. **Lack of access to information**: Farmers had limited access to relevant and timely information regarding weather patterns, market prices, agricultural practices, and government schemes. This lack of information often led to suboptimal decision-making and reduced profitability.
2. **Traditional farming practices:** Agriculture was primarily reliant on age-old traditional practices handed down through generations. While some of these practices were effective, they were not always optimized for modern efficiency and sustainability
3. **Inadequate infrastructure**: Rural areas, where agriculture is predominantly practiced, often lacked proper infrastructure, including good roads, electricity, and telecommunication networks. This hindered the smooth flow of goods, services, and information.
4. **Low productivity**: The productivity of Indian agriculture was relatively low due to factors such as limited access to improved seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and modern machinery. This resulted in lower yields and reduced income for farmers.
5. **Inefficient supply chain**: The supply chain from farm to market was inefficient, characterized by multiple intermediaries, which often resulted in high post-harvest losses and reduced returns to farmers

The government of India of late has been emphasising upon the implementation of the Digital India programme, which empowers citizens with e-access to government services and livelihood-related services. The recent Union Budget 2022 categorically focuses upon digital connectivity of villages as the need of the day, with the chief objective of providing facilities in the villages through broadband connectivity.

Information Communication Technology (ICT) has had a transformative impact on the Indian agriculture sector, bringing about significant changes and improvements. Here are some ways in which ICT has changed Indian agriculture:

1. **Access to information**: ICT has facilitated easy access to crucial information for farmers. Weather forecasts, market prices, crop advisories, best agricultural practices, and government schemes are now readily available through mobile apps, websites, and SMS services. This enables farmers to make informed decisions, optimize their farming practices, and improve crop yields.
2. **Precision agriculture**: ICT tools such as drones, satellite imagery, and GPS-enabled devices have enabled precision agriculture. Farmers can now monitor their fields, identify crop health issues, and apply inputs (e.g., fertilizers, pesticides) precisely where needed. This targeted approach increases efficiency and reduces resource wastage.
3. **Market linkages**: Online platforms and mobile apps have emerged as efficient marketplaces, connecting farmers directly with buyers and eliminating the need for intermediaries. This fosters transparency, reduces transaction costs, and enables farmers to get better prices for their produce.
4. **Supply chain efficiency:** ICT has improved supply chain management in agriculture. With better logistics and tracking systems, post-harvest losses have reduced, and the quality of produce has improved during transportation and storage.
5. **Access to finance**: Mobile banking and digital payment systems have made it easier for farmers, especially in remote areas, to access financial services. They can now avail credit, insurance, and other financial products, empowering them to invest in better agricultural inputs and technologies.
6. **Agri-tech startups**: The rise of agri-tech startups in India has brought innovative solutions to farming challenges. These startups leverage ICT to provide services like soil testing, farm management, e-commerce platforms, and agricultural extension services, all aimed at enhancing productivity and profitability.
7. **E-commerce for agricultural inputs**: Online platforms have emerged that enable farmers to purchase seeds, fertilizers, and other agricultural inputs directly from suppliers. This opens up access to a wider range of products and ensures fair pricing.

Recognising the integrative and service delivery potential of the ICT, the Government of India is implementing a National e-Governance Plan in Agriculture (NeGPA) through its Department of Information Technology .It was initially launched in 2010–2011 in seven pilot states, which aimed at achieving rapid development in agriculture through ICT.

Some ICT models developed by Indian government and their uses are discussed as below

1. **E-Choupal** – It was launched in June 2000 by ITC’s agribusiness Division is enabling Indian agriculture to significantly enhance its competitiveness by empowering Indian farmers through the power of the Internet.
2. **Ikisan project** - The Ikisan is the ICT initiative of the Nagarjuna group of companies that happens to be the largest private entity sup-plying farmers’ agricultural needs. It is a one-stop information resource for the Indian farmer and it provides online, detailed content on crops, crop management techniques, fertilisers and pesticides, and a host of other agriculture related material.
3. **Kisan call centres**- The KCCs—the important information gateway for the farmers—were launched in India in 2004 by the Department of Agricultural and Co-operation with focus on technologies such as desktop computer system with Internet connectivity, high bandwidth telephone lines, and telephones with headphones and teleconferencing facility.
4. **Gyandoot project** - Gyandoot, a government-to-citizen intranet-based service portal implemented in January 2000 in the Dhar district1 of Madhya Pradesh, was designed to provide benefits of information technology to people in rural areas by directly linking the government and villagers through information kiosks
5. **eNAM** - The National Agriculture Market, called the eNAM, is an online trading platform for agriculture and related products in India. It helps in better price discovery and provides facilities for improving the existing market system. It removes any information that causes an imbalance between the buyers and the sellers and it also enhances real-time price discovery that is based on the actual demand and supply

Govt ICT projects implemention is not so easy in rural areas . Extension officers , Scientists and Govt have to face different types of problem to overcome this problems.

1.Lack of sustainable and affordable power supply

2.Limited funding opportunities

3.Selecting a suitable technology

4.Poor infrastructure

5.Technological illiteracy

6.High costs of ICTs

7.Inexperienced computer users

8.Lack of trained technical support

This all things are theoretical matter and govt iniciatives but in actual real life definitely ICT creates a huge vital role in the developing of lifestyle of rural peoples and agriculture system. Few years ago when ICT was not introduced to agriculture field specifically on that’s time our farmers followed the traditional method for agriculture production. This is not a bad thing but that time they can not analyse the pest attacks, some years new pests attacked the field then the farmers were totally unaware about that. They even don’t know about the right dose of fertilizers. They unaware about the soil health. In some areas they cannot get the proper weather forecast . so then they all do this as an assumption. They have not proper knowledge and ingredients that help them to overcome from these problems. In fact they don’t know about the proper market price. Due to this problem the market price fractuates greatly. So in agriculture market there were no startup or small industries that time also. In India maximum people directly involved in agriculture through different ways. So to overcome this problems through a uniform process is becoming challenge to the govt. But with the help of the IT department along with our traditional agricultural methods they introduced the ICT. Under ICT there are lots of things are present like updating through mobile , dedicated application for marketing and other problems , drones , advanced machineries, advise of the experts through phone call or massages, etc. These things not only develop the whole agriculture background but also developed the life style of a rural people and a rural farmer. Through network connectivity and the use of mobile they get proper weather forecast so they get the preparation well to face the problem moreover they can get the news of the market and prices of fertilizer, seed etc. It helps them from the losses of post harvest of the crops . Through thus initiatives they can able to maximise their production also reduced the losses. So they can make more profit and develop their lifestyle. With the help of technology they can increasing their knowledge as well as their lifestyle.

After increasing the the agricultural production there are lots of small scale industries are established at rural side. So the employment generation is happened. Also this helps to develop the lifestyle of rural people.