

ICT Innovations in Education: Assessment of Government Initiatives and ICT Implementation

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Abstract

The current study is an endeavour to understand and interpret the initiatives taken by the government of India for the implementation of Information and Communication Technology in education, more specifically, at secondary level in Jammu and Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh. Use of Information and Communication Technology for teaching and learning has received a lot of attention in the last two decades. The Ministry of Human Resource Development government of India has made proposals for the assimilation of ICT in education at secondary level. The investigator followed the technique of documentation for the analysis and interpretation of data collected. The findings of the study revealed that though the initiatives were uniform for the whole country, however the integration varies from state to state. The state government of Uttar Pradesh is serious and more competent than the government of Jammu and Kashmir. The findings revealed that approval of smart schools under ICT Scheme, budget allocation, financial assistance, number of schools covered under the scheme of Information and Communication Technology and the amount approved by Project Monitoring and Evaluating Group (PM&EG) under the Scheme of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Schools varies between the states. It can be concluded that need of the hour is to utilize new technologies in classroom instruction as ICT became ubiquitous and influenced every domain of life.

Key Words: Implementation; Information and Communication Technology; Project Monitoring and Evaluating Group; ICT Scheme.

Introduction

Uttar Pradesh is a densely populated state in India with a population of about 19.98 crores according to census 2011. Total population of Uttar Pradesh as per 2011 census is 199,812,341 of which male and female are 104,480,510 and 95,331,831 respectively. It is located in the northern region of the country spread over an area

of 240,928 square kilometres. The state of Uttar Pradesh shares its borders with other neighbouring states like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Haryana. The state also shares its border with the national capital, New Delhi along with the newly formed state of Uttarakhand. The growth rate of the population of Uttar Pradesh is about 20%.



Source: Maps of India.com

The state has some of the most important educational institutions in the country. The literacy rate of Uttar Pradesh is 67.68

percent of which male literacy rate is 77.28 percent while as female literacy rate stands at 51.36 percent.

Description	Census 2011
Total population	199,812,341 Crores
Literacy rate	67.68 %
Male literacy rate	77.28 %
Female literacy rate	51.36%

Source: Census 2011

Jammu and Kashmir State covers an area of 222,236 Square kilometres including 78,114 square kilometres of Pakistan occupied Kashmir. The state is administratively divided into three regions: Jammu, the Kashmir valley and Ladakh with 22 districts, 107 blocks and 66252

villages. It shares its borders with the states; Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, and the neighbouring countries of Pakistan, China and Afghanistan. Urdu, Kashmiri and Dogri are the official languages of the state. Hindi, Pahari and Ladakhi are also spoken in some parts of the state.



Source: Maps of India.com

The literacy rate of the state is 68.74 percent of which Male literacy stands at

78.26 percent and Female literacy rate is 58.01percent as per census 2011.

Description	Census 2011
Total population	12,548,926
Literacy rate	68.74%
Male literacy rate	78.26%
Female literacy rate	58.01%

Source: Census 2011

The description of total population, literacy rate and other important factors represents a vast difference between the states of Uttar Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir. The literacy rate in the latter is satisfactory than the former. According to Ministry of Human Resource Development Government of India the

total number of blocks in Uttar Pradesh is 830 while as in Jammu and Kashmir it is only 215.

The description of blocks, educationally backward blocks (EBB) and non-educationally backward blocks (Non-EBB) in both the states is given in the table that follows;

State	Total Blocks	Educationally backward blocks	Non educationally backward blocks
Uttar Pradesh	830	680	150
Jammu and Kashmir	215	97	118

Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development Government of India

The information given in the table reveals that 81.92% blocks in Uttar Pradesh are educationally backward blocks and only 18.07% blocks are non- educationally backward blocks. While as in Jammu and Kashmir 45.11% blocks are educationally backward and 54.88% blocks are non- educationally backward. The percentage of educationally backward blocks is less in Jammu and Kashmir than Uttar Pradesh. Thus it can be concluded that Jammu and Kashmir is educationally forward than the state of Uttar Pradesh.

Education is a concurrent subject. The Government of India provides the overall policy framework, financial support and guidelines to guarantee a national standard of education. The implementation of any scheme is principally done at the state level. The importance of using Information and Communication Technology for improving the quality of education has been realized and emphasized. Department of School Education and Literacy Ministry of Human Resource Development Government of India have developed '*National Policy on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in School*'. The National Policy on Education 1986 which was revised in 1992

emphasized on employing educational technology in education to improve its quality. The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) strongly recommended ICT in the norms for schooling which has been high lightened in its report on '*Universal Secondary Education 2005*'. Consequently major government schemes and initiatives for using ICT in education came into existence for developing ICT skills in future fathers at school level.

A coherent policy level framework led by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Global e-Schools Initiative (GeSCI), and Centre for Science, Development and Media Studies (CSDMS) for using ICTs in school education in India was recently initiated. Moreover, the Ministry of Education in India has invested a great deal of funds to facilitate the integration of ICT in schools.

The Ministry of Human Resource Development Government of India approved schools under centrally sponsored scheme of Information and Communication Technology. The number of such schools and mode of ICT implementation in Jammu and Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh is shown in the table as follows;

Schools Sanctioned under Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Schools(As on 31.03.2009)		
State	Schools sanctioned for coverage	Mode of implementation
Jammu and Kashmir	200	Outright Purchase
Uttar Pradesh	1500	Boot Model
India	26350	

Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India.

The information in the table above shows that out of total 26350 schools only 200 schools were approved for Jammu and Kashmir which makes 0.75% and 1500 schools were sanctioned for the state of Uttar Pradesh which stands at 5.69%.

Government of India has provided financial assistance to the states and Union territories for implementation of Information and Communication

Technology under centrally sponsored scheme of Information and Communication Technology in schools. Financial Assistance Released and Utilised under Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in schools' to the states of Jammu and Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh from 2009 to 2013 is given in the table as under;

Financial Assistance Released and Utilised under Centrally Sponsored Scheme of ICT in Schools of J&K and UP (2009-2010 to 2012-2013)								
Rs in Lakh								
States	2009-10		2010-11		2011-12		2012-13	
	Released	Utilised	Released	Utilised	Released	Utilised	Released	Utilised
Jammu and Kashmir	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Uttar Pradesh	0.00	0.00	3984.82	3984.83	6268.17	4267.07	4302.72	0.00

Source: Lok Sabha Question No. 2737, dated on 13.03.2013.

Information and communication technology (ICT) is an essential part of the modern world. Digital and electronic technologies have shortened distances and the whole world became at hand (Kuo, 2005). According to Davis and Tearle (1999), ICT has the potential to accelerate, enrich, and deepen skills; motivate and engage students in learning; helps to relate school experiences to work practices; helps to create economic viability for tomorrow's workers; contributes to radical changes in school; strengthens teaching, and provides opportunities for connection between the school and the world. Keeping

the potentiality of ICT in view, there is an urgent need to open schools and develop the infrastructure in the existing ones in order to incorporate the innovative changes that today's society needs and ICT can bring about in the field of education. The Ministry of Human Resource Development Government of India approved schools under centrally sponsored scheme of Information and Communication Technology in schools in Jammu and Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh from 2005-2006 to 2012-13. The number of such schools is given in the table as under;

Number of Schools Approved Including Smart Schools under Centrally Sponsored Scheme of ICT in Schools in J &K and UP from 2005-2006 to 2012-2013									
States	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	No. Of smart schools approved by PM&EG
Jammu and Kashmir	140	--	--	--	200	--	--	--	--
Uttar Pradesh	--	200	2500	1500	--	1500	1608	--	5

Source: Lok Sabha Question No. 2044, dated on 05.12.2012.

It is clear from the information given in the table that the schools approved under the centrally sponsored scheme of Information and Communication Technology in Jammu and Kashmir is much less than Uttar Pradesh. In Uttar Pradesh five smart schools have also been approved by the Project Monitoring and Evaluation Group (PM&EG) and no such school has been sanctioned for the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Evaluation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) scheme

The evaluation of the progress of Information and Communication

Technology (ICT) scheme is being monitored at the national level by Project Monitoring and Evaluation Group. The Project Monitoring and Evaluation Group (PM&EG) has approved schools under the scheme of Information and Communication Technology in two parts during the year 2007-2008. In its part first schools have been approved to the state of Uttar Pradesh and its part second schools have been sanctioned to the state of Jammu and Kashmir under the scheme of Information and Communication Technology in schools.

The number of schools and amount approved by Project Monitoring and Evaluation Group under scheme of Information and Communication Technology in Schools in Uttar Pradesh is presented in the table that follows.

Part I (2007-2008)

(Rs. In Lakh)						
State	Provision made in State Budget	Schools and Amount approved by PM &EG under Boot Model (A)				
		School	Amount	Share Centre State		Fund Released
Uttar Pradesh	6700.00	2500	5000.00	3750.00	1250.00	3115.47

Source: Compiled from the statistics released by: Lok Sabha Question No. 1365, dated on 26.11.2007.

The number of schools and amount approved by Project Monitoring and Evaluation Group in part second to the state of Jammu and Kashmir during the year 2007-08 is indicated in the following table.

Part II (2007-2008)

(Rs. In Lakh)						
State	Schools and Amount approved by PM &EG under Out Right Purchase Model (B)					
	School	Amount	Share Centre State		Fund Released	
Jammu and Kashmir	200	1340.00	1206.00	134.00	--	

Source: Compiled from the statistics released by: Lok Sabha Question No. 1365, dated on 26.11.2007.

It is clear from the information given in the tables (table 1 and 2) that the state of Uttar Pradesh has made budgetary provision of Rs. 6700 lakhs for the establishment of schools under the scheme of Information and Communication Technology in schools while the state of Jammu and Kashmir has not made such budgetary provisions. It is also clear that 2500 schools were approved to the state of Uttar

Pradesh while only 200 schools were sanctioned to the state of Jammu and Kashmir which latter on have been cancelled by the Ministry of Human Resource Development government of India. Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development Government of India informed through a letter dated 20th January 2014 with number as: F.No. 11-

35/2007-Sch-5 to the Secretary Education Jammu and Kashmir that 200 schools sanctioned under Centrally Sponsored Scheme of ICT in Schools in 2008-09 stands cancelled with refunding of unspent balance of Rupees 603 lakh lying with the state as the government of the state is facing problems in implementing the scheme. The state government agreed to pay back the unspent amount.

The Project Monitoring and Evaluation Group held several meetings with state governments and Administrations of Union Territories to discuss Computer Education Plans under the Scheme of "Information and Communication Technology in Schools". The investigator made an effort to understand and evaluate the implementation of Information and Communication Technology in Jammu and Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh.

The first meeting of Project Monitoring and Evaluation Group was held on 08.08.2008 under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy to consider the Computer Education Plans of six states. These states include Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

The second meeting of Project Monitoring and Evaluation Group was scheduled and held on 04.11.2008 to contemplate the Computer Education Plans of different states including Uttar Pradesh. The Principal Secretary (School Education), Government of Uttar Pradesh participated in the meeting.

The Project Monitoring and Evaluation Group sanctioned another 1500 schools to be covered under BOOT model for a

period of five years. An amount of Rupees 5 lakh would be released for every school.

The third meeting of Project Monitoring and Evaluation Group was held on 19th August, 2009 to discuss the Computer Education Plans of State Governments of Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Meghalaya, Manipur, and proposals of SIET Hyderabad and SIET Pune. Haryana and Manipur had expressed their inability to participate in the meeting but unfortunately no official from Jammu and Kashmir attended the meeting.

Another meeting of the Project Monitoring and Evaluation Group was held on 18th November, 2009 to deliberate over the Computer Education Plans of different States including Jammu and Kashmir.

The Project Monitoring and Evaluation Group discussed the matter thoroughly and following decisions were made:

- 200 Schools sanctioned in the year 2007-08 for coverage under outright purchase would now be covered in 2009-10.
- The project had been revalidated from 2007-08 to 2008-09 and then to 2009-10 and an amount of Rupees 200 lakhs would now be utilized during 2009-10 and if need arises no further revalidation would be granted to the state for the completion of the project.
- In case the state government is not able to utilize an amount of Rupees 603 lakhs sanctioned for 200 during the financial year 2009-10, the government would return the unspent amount and the approval of 200 schools would also be cancelled. Intimated.

At last, it is on 20 January 2014 that a letter with number as: F.No. 11-35/2007-Sch-5 served to the Secretary Education

Jammu and Kashmir by the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development Government of India which intimated that 200 schools approved under Centrally Sponsored Scheme of ICT in Schools in the year 2008-09 stands cancelled with refunding of unspent balance of Rupees 603 lakh lying with the state as the government of the state is facing problems in implementing the scheme. The state government agreed to pay back the unspent amount.

The Project Monitoring and Evaluation Group Meeting held another meeting on 1st October, 2010 to consider the Computer Education Plans received from some Union Territories and few State Governments including Uttar Pradesh.

The Project Monitoring and Evaluation Group made a thorough deliberation over the matter and made following resolutions:

- Project Monitoring and Evaluation Group recommended 1500 schools for coverage during 2010-11 through BOOT model.
- Project Monitoring and Evaluation Group also recommended 5 smart schools.
- The central government would release its share at the rate of Rs.1 lakh per year per school in the first four years and Rs.0.80 lakh in the fifth year.

Another meeting of the Project Monitoring and Evaluation Group was held on 14th September, 2011 to consider the Computer Education Plans of State Governments of Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Union Territories Administration of Puducherry and proposals from SIET-Thiruvananthapuram and SIET-Hyderabad.

After discussions, following decisions were taken:

i) Project Monitoring and Evaluation Group approved 1608 schools (972 secondary and 636 higher secondary schools) for coverage under BOOT model for a period of 5 years with effect from 2011-12.

ii) The central share of Rupees 4.80 lakhs would be released for every school in the following phased manner:-

- 2011-12 for 1608 schools @ Rs 1.00 lakh per school.
- 2012-13 for 1608 schools @ Rs 1.00 lakh per school
- 2013-14 for 1608 schools @ Rs 1.00 lakh per school
- 2014-15 for 1608 schools @ Rs 1.00 lakh per school
- 2015-16 for 1608 schools @ Rs0.80 lakh per school

iii) Recurring expenditure would be processed on file on reimbursement basis on submission of actual expenditure incurred and on installation of infrastructure.

The Project Monitoring and Evaluation Group held next Meeting on 1st December 2011 to consider the Computer Education Plans of Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, SIET, Hyderabad and NIC under the Scheme of Information & Communication Technology (ICT) in School Scheme. Since there was no representation from the State of Jammu and Kashmir so the consideration of the proposals from Jammu and Kashmir State was deferred.

Conclusion

Thus it is clear from the information compiled from the statistics released by Lok Sabha as responses to some questions that the government of Uttar Pradesh proposed budgetary provisions and utilized funds for the development of infrastructure and implementation of Information and Communication Technology while as the government of Jammu and Kashmir failed to attend meetings with Project Monitoring and Evaluation Group, unable to make budgetary provisions, revalidation of the

project period twice for the coverage of schools under the scheme of Information and Communication Technology and thereafter revalidation was refused and the state government agreed to return unspent amount to the Ministry of Human Resource Development government of India. This all manifests negative attitude towards the innovations that can bring laurels to education and enhance the overall quality of education.

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