

Assessment of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) @ School Scheme in Jammu and Kashmir: An Evaluative study

Showkat Ahmad Rather¹ and Salma Kuraishy²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Education, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh

²Associate Professor, Department of Education, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh,

Abstract: *The study is intended to appraise ICT@ School scheme in Jammu and Kashmir launched by the Government of India in 2004 with an assignment to devise, catalyse and maintain Information and Communication Technology and ICT enabled activities and processes for improving access, excellence and competence in the school organization. Information Communication Technology (ICT) has contributed greatly to the improvement of education in schools globally. The use of Information and Communication Technology has fundamentally changed the education industry and the way knowledge is being transmitted from teachers to the students' (Haghighi and Eskandari 2012). The Government of India has taken a number of measures for implementing ICT in school education. The investigator has followed documentation technique for analyzing the data gathered from Ministry of Human Resource Development government of India, Education statistics of India, Census 2011 and DISE (Education Report Card). The findings of the study revealed that in spite of the initiatives taken by the government at Centre, the provision for incentives like national ICT award for teachers, the state government failed to implement the scheme. The centre government has approved smart schools and released funds but per contra to this, the state government requested for the cancellation of schools and returned the funds. The results revealed some contrary and mixed results as well. The results also shows that government at centre is committed to implement ICT@ School Scheme in the country as a whole but the state government of Jammu and Kashmir is not serious and dedicated towards the implementation of the scheme. The analysis reveals that the scheme is sufficient to influence and improve the Indian education system.*

Key Words: Information and Communication Technology, Implementation of ICT, DISE, ICT@ School Scheme.

Introduction

Jammu and Kashmir is a multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-racial state covering an area of 222,236 Sq. Km. The state is administratively divided into three regions: Jammu, the Kashmir valley and Ladakh with 22 districts. It shares borders with 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. The literacy rate of the state is 68.74% (Male literacy rate: 78.26 and Female literacy rate: 58.01) as per census 2011.

Globalization has changed the rationale and direction of education. According to Teichler (2004), globalization assumes a blurring of borders and national systems of education. Technological advancements have caused vital changes in many domains of societal and individual life. Growth of information and communication technology brought about swift changes in school education. Technological innovations have played a pivotal role in improving teaching and learning in light of educational reforms around the globe (Kahveci, Sahin and Genc, 2011). Technological developments results in the conviction that the integration of Information and Communication Technologies into learning interaction may bring about a new era in the educational practice (Tsikalaki & Valatidis, 2010).

Education is on top priority of the government of Jammu and Kashmir and the educational progress is the main concern of the state government but it is still lagging behind in the deployment of innovations like ICT in education. Department of School Education and Literacy Ministry of Human Resource Development government of India launched the Centrally Sponsored ICT@ Schools Scheme in December 2004, and modified in 2010 with a mission to endorse computer enabled learning and usage of ICT in teaching. The scheme is run by the states with funding support from the Ministry of Human Resources Development government of India. The policy aimed at providing opportunities to secondary stage students to build their competence on ICT skills and make them learn through computer aided learning process. ICT has revolutionized all including education. It has the power to change the daily practices of teachers. ICT has radically changed the pattern of teaching and learning. It has also changed the roles played by both teachers and students. According to Dawes (2001) Information and Communication Technology has the power to support teaching and learning, and provide innovative approaches for doing the required work in a way that was never possible before.

The Centrally Sponsored Information and Communication Technology (ICT) @ School

Scheme have four components which are briefly described as under;

- ❖ Partnership between Central government and state government or the Administration of Union Territories for providing computer aided education at Secondary level.
- ❖ Establishment of smart schools.
- ❖ Engagement of ICT special teacher, ICT training for teachers and National award for teachers for innovative use of ICT in education.
- ❖ Development of e-content by Central Institute of Education Technologies (CIET), State Institutes of Education Technologies (SIETs) and Regional Institutes of Education (RIEs).

Information Communication Technology is an important component in the school organization as it prepares the citizens for the challenges they may in the future. The quality of teaching is often related to the use of ICT in teaching and learning. Many states responded fervently to the potentialities of the scheme. Majority of the schools across many states are fully equipped with ICT infrastructure. Contrary to the arrangements made by different states across India for the implementation of the scheme, the government of Jammu and Kashmir is yet to decide the fate of the scheme in the state.

The Centrally Sponsored Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Scheme of Ministry of Human Resource Development, government of India have approved schools for different states. The number of Schools Sanctioned under Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Jammu and Kashmir as on 31.03.2009 is shown in the table that follows;

Table 1: Showing number of schools sanctioned under centrally sponsored scheme of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Number of Schools Sanctioned under Centrally Sponsored Scheme of ICT in Schools in Jammu and Kashmir (As on 31.03.2009)		
State	School Sanctioned for Coverage	Mode of Implementation
Jammu and Kashmir	200	Outright Purchase

Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India. (10918)

The education system has been growing worldwide. Many countries around the globe are investing in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to improve education. All levels of education have experienced expansion by leaps and bounds. Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of School Education and Literacy 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 Ministry of Human Resource Development government of India released funds under Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Schools and utilized by the government of states and Administration of Union Territories. However no funds were released from 2009-10 to 2012-13 for the state of Jammu and Kashmir because the inability shown by the state government to implement ICT Scheme in Schools. The information regarding the financial assistance is shown in the table hereunder.

Table 2: Showing Financial Assistance Released and Utilized under Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Schools' of Jammu and Kashmir (2009-2010 to 2012-2013)

State	(Rs. In Lakh)							
	2009-10		2010-11		2011-12		2012-13	
	Released	Utilized	Released	Utilized	Released	Utilized	Released	Utilized
Jammu and Kashmir	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Source: Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 28737 dated 13. 03.2013

However the Ministry of Human Resource Development government of India released an amount of Rs. 570.06 during 2007-08 under Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Schools for Jammu and Kashmir. The details of fund releases under ICT in school scheme during 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12 for Jammu and Kashmir is shown as under;

Table 3: Showing details of Fund released under ICT in school for Jammu and Kashmir

Name of the State	Funds Released (Rs. In Lakh)					
	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12 Up to Feb. 2012
Jammu and Kashmir		570.06	---	---	---	---

Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development govt. of India

The information presented in the table reveals that Rs.570.00 lakh were released during 2007-08 and thereafter no funds were released till date as the government of the state failed to implement ICT in School Scheme.

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Information and Communications Technology in schools act as a catalyst to bridge the digital divide amongst students of different socioeconomic status. The Scheme provides support to States and Union Territories of India to set up computer labs and smart schools in Kendriya Vidyalas and Navodaya Vidyalas which are known as 'pace setting institutions' of the government of India to act as "Technology Demonstrators". The number of schools approved including smart schools in Jammu and Kashmir from 2004-05 to 2012-13 is shown in the table that follows.

Table4: Showing the number of schools approved under centrally sponsored scheme of Information and Communication Technology in Jammu and Kashmir

State	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	No. of Smart schools approved
Jammu and Kashmir	--	140	--	--	--	200	--	--	0	--

Source: Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 3189, dated on 04.05.2012 & Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2737, dated on 13.03.2013.

The information given in the table is the response to the questions with numbers 3189 dated 04.05.2012 and 2737 dated 13.03.2013 raised in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha respectively. The information clearly reveals that during 2005-06, 140 schools were approved and during 2009-10, 200 schools were sanctioned and no smart school was approved till date in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Here the information provided as answers to these two questions is contradictory as in 2005-06, 140 schools were approved and during 2009-10, 200 schools were approved making a total of 340 schools but in the latter that was faxed to the state government dated 20th January 2014 with number as: F.No. 11-35/2007-Sch-5 for the cancellation of 200 schools to the Secretary Education Jammu and Kashmir and it was unanimously agreed with refunding of unspent balance of Rupees 603 lakh lying with the state. The remaining 140 schools exists nowhere in the state as per the available information.

Information and Communications Technology has a vital role to play in education. The entity of ICT in education is at the crossroads between learning and the fast-changing world of technology. In recent years Information and Communication Technology has emerged as a policy area in education. Many countries have developed ICT strategies for education or for the development of the information society at large in the country (J.Qystein 2009). The access to Information and Communication Technology in all domains of life has led to the concept of a 'knowledge-based society'. ICT has changed and revolutionized the whole world and education system has not been immune to the development of ICT. Nowadays it is impossible to imagine education without Information and Communication Technology. ICT has a central role in the development of the knowledge economy.

Information and Communication Technology is a permanent feature in the landscape of teaching and learning (Michael Kompf 2005).

The government of India is claiming that several schools were covered under ICT in School Scheme in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The details of information regarding the number of schools covered under the scheme are presented in the table that follows.

Table 5: Showing the number of schools covered under Information and Communication Technology in schools of Jammu and Kashmir

Number of Schools Covered under ICT in Schools Scheme in Jammu and Kashmir (2009-2010)	
State	Total No. of Schools covered under ICT in Schools Scheme
Jammu and Kashmir	340

Source: Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 580, dated on 16.05.2012.

The Secondary Education Report Card 2012-13 framed by NEUPA is based on the data received from as many as 228 thousand schools spread over 662 districts across India. According to State Secondary Education Report Card 2012-13, the total Secondary Schools in the State of Jammu and Kashmir is 3923 (Rural 2842 an Urban 1081 schools).

The ICT @Schools is a compilation of different facilities in the school. The scheme representing an opportunity to schools to build up various components including establishment of infrastructure like electricity, internet and telephony, fire safety, furniture, etc.; computer hardware and software, digital devices and digital content; provision of a computer teacher, building of capacities in ICT, and school automation. The

State Secondary Education Report Card 2012-13 shows that only 13.46 percent schools are with ICT laboratory facility, 70.02 percent schools with electricity facility and only 42.72 percent schools are with internet facility (U-DISE 2012-13).

Conclusion

The current study is anticipated to evaluate centrally sponsored scheme of Information and Communication Technology in school of Jammu and Kashmir. Research indicated that government of India has taken several initiatives for the implementation of Information and Communication Technology in education. The measures taken by the government of India aimed at developing ICT skills in students and make them learn through computer aided learning process. Encouragement is continuous by the government of India towards utilization of Information and Communication Technology in schools. Central government is providing lot of opportunities to improve the quality of education at all levels in the country. But the attitudinal aspects of stakeholders, administrators and the government of Jammu and Kashmir may remain as a stumbling block in implementation and utilization of Information and Communication Technology in schools. Establishment of smart schools, capacity building programmes and capacity enhancement of all teachers in ICT skill management and engagement of ICT special teachers were the targets of the scheme. Release of funds, approval of schools, framing of policies and

programmes are not adequate but firm commitment and positive attitude of all who are at the helm of affairs including the government are the prerequisites for proper utilization and implementation of Information and Communication Technology scheme in schools. Relevant initiative and programmes are to be taken by the government of Jammu and Kashmir for the proper operation and implementation of Information and Communication Technology in education to be at par with the initiatives taken by the government of other states of India.

Despite the fact that Ministry of Human Resource Development, government of India framed the scheme in late 2004 for the amalgamation of ICT in school education but the government of Jammu and Kashmir failed to integrate the scheme. In order to execute ICT @ School scheme successfully in the state of Jammu and Kashmir and to accomplish its time bound objectives, there is an urgent need of efficient governance, qualitative school infrastructure and technology skilled future teachers and teacher educators who would be psychologically and academically proficient to understand the magnitude of ICT and competent enough to make use of pedagogical innovations and the innovations of Information and Communication Technology in education. The successful implementation of ICT@ school scheme will be dependent largely on the acknowledgment of the importance of ICT application to education.

References

- Brush, T. (2003). Preparing tomorrow's teachers to use technology (PT3). *Educational Technology Research & Development*, 51(1), 39-128.
- Cloke, C. and Sharif, S. (2001). Why use information and communication technology in schools? Some theoretical and practical issues. *Journal of Information Technology for Teacher Education*, 10, (1and 2), 7-18.
- Dawes, L. (2001). *What stops teachers using new technology?* In M. Leask (Ed.), *Issues in Teaching using ICT* (pp. 61-79). London: Routledge.
- D. P. S. Seth, 2006 "A report on National Knowledge Network" National Knowledge Commission. www.knowledgecommission.gov.in/reports/default.asp.
- Ertmer, P. A. (2010). "Teacher Technology Change: How Knowledge, Confidence, Beliefs, and Culture Intersect." *Journal of Research in Teacher Education* 42(3): 255-284.
- Elliott, J. (2001) *Action Research for Educational Change*, Milton Keynes: Open University press
- Haghighi, S. & Eskandari, M. (2012). A study on barriers of using information technology on learning and teaching in elementary Schools, *Management Science Letters*, 2, pp. 417-424.
- Kahveci, Ajda; Sahin, Nese & Genc, Sebnem (2011). Computer Perceptions of Secondary School Teachers and Impacting Demographics: A Turkish Perspective. *TOJET: The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 10(1), 71-80.
- J.Qystein (2009). "In search of the sustainable knowledge base: multi-channel and multi-method?" Assessing the effects of ICT in education. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2009
- J&K Government fails to implement ICT@School Scheme Central share of Rs 603 Lakh for covering 200 schools cancelled. (2014, 25 February). Jammu Kashmir News Point.
- Kompf, M. (2005). "Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and the Seduction of Knowledge, Teaching, and Learning: What Lies Ahead for Education." *Curriculum Inquiry*, 35(2).

- Martin, M. (Ed.).2007. *Cross-border higher education: regulation, quality assurance and impact (vol. 1)*. Paris: IIEP-UNESCO.
- MHRD probing irregularities in Central schemes. (2012, 22July). *Greater Kashmir*, A4
- “National Policy on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in School Education (Draft).” 2012. Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India
- NUEPA (2013). *State Report Card 2012-13*.
- Plomp, T., Anderson, R. E., Law, N., & Quale, A. (Eds.). (2009). *Cross-national information and communication technology: policies and practices in education*. Charlotte, N.C.: Information Age Publishing.
- RMSA: JK fails to utilize Rs 6 crore central funds. (2013, 21 October). *Greater Kashmir*, P.A1.
- Secondary Education Overview (2014), Available at: <http://mhrd.gov.in/secondaryedu>.
- Teichler, U. 2004. “The changing debate on internationalization of higher education”. In: *Higher Education*, 28(1), 5-26.
- Tsikalaki, K. and Valatidis, E. (2010). The role of Information and Communication Technologies in society, our life and education. In *Epistimoniko Vima*, Issue 13 (pp. 133-140). Athens: PRESS-LINE.
- <http://www.jkeducation.gov.in/stateProfile.php>
- <http://www.indiaeducationstat.com/education/6370/educationalchemes/6374/stats.aspx>
- <http://www.dise.com>
- <http://mhrd.gov.in/secondaryedu>