

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY - 'THE BASIC NEED' FOR TRANSFORMING RURAL INDIA FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: *Information Technology has played a vital role in the development for urban economy. Mobile phones, internet, tablets, iPods, their applications, social media even traveling, cooking, communication etc. are part of our lives from the start till the end of the day. On the contrary rural economy and life of rural India still lags miles behind as compared to urban economy. We cannot make Indian economy better unless we do not understand the importance and strength of economy of rural sector.*

Education is the backbone of every nation. In many developing countries bringing a large percentage of students to education system has been a great challenge. The reasons are the geographical location, socio-economic condition etc. Poor transport facility discourages the rural students to come to school regularly. Scarcity of efficient teacher in the rural schools and a large student teacher ratio to the student side is also a reason for dropout of a large percentage of students in the midway of their education. Thus a great mismatch of education quality is observed when comparison is made with rural and urban students. Adoption of IT in education can minimize this gap. Achieving higher education from rural areas is a great challenge. Information and communication technology based distance learning facility can help a lot in providing higher education to the rural students.

This paper examines several ongoing projects that aim to provide IT-based services to rural populations in India. The analysis highlights the common building blocks required for successful implementation, and the relative strengths and weaknesses of different approaches.

Technology is touching every aspect of urban society and changing it dramatically. But there is one very important and indispensable part of the society that has also been tapped by new innovations and discoveries and that is education. In India illiteracy is one of the biggest problems. Lack of easy access, lack of teachers, lack of interest, poverty, lack of infrastructure, lack of technology oriented curriculum are few of the reasons which are

holding back the progress in rural education. With the help of technology mass education has become easy and education scenario is changed. Rural education needs e-learning technologies. Teachers at the schools are not well equipped with the gadgets. So teachers should be given printers, laptops for giving notes and notices to students.

Keywords: *Information and Communication Technology, Rural education, Adoption of I.T.*

INTRODUCTION

Information is power and power is information. Without information there can be no growth. Now information is penetrating into rural India as well, because without its presence there, we cannot think about development of the entire country.

For making India developed country, we will have to propagate Information Technology in rural India, because 70 per cent of India's people still reside in the rural areas. Thus, technological advancement is necessary for every nook and corner of India. But still in India most of the rural public is very much far away from the world of Information Technology. The following issues need to be looked into for development of rural India:

1. First of all there is a requirement of strong infrastructure for I.T
2. Maintenance of hardware and software is not easy and cost effective.
3. Rural youths are not in a position to learn and get higher education, pre-dominantly computer education
4. Lack of knowledge of English is also a big obstacle.
5. Broadband facility is still non-consistent for rural people.

If we are speaking about development of rural India, it cannot be comprehensive without development of education. Regarding education, the students in rural community are far away from Information communication technology. They are not having the computer lab in their schools. If there are computers, there is no internet connection with it. So they are not ready to keep up with the upcoming technology. To provide quality service in rural development using Information Technology a strong infrastructure backbone is required. Infrastructure backbone includes workstation, high speed network, Projection/Display technology, interactive devices, video conferencing equipment, printer etc. For mobile workstation devices like laptop, tablets, notebooks are essential. In hill area or rural area where setting up

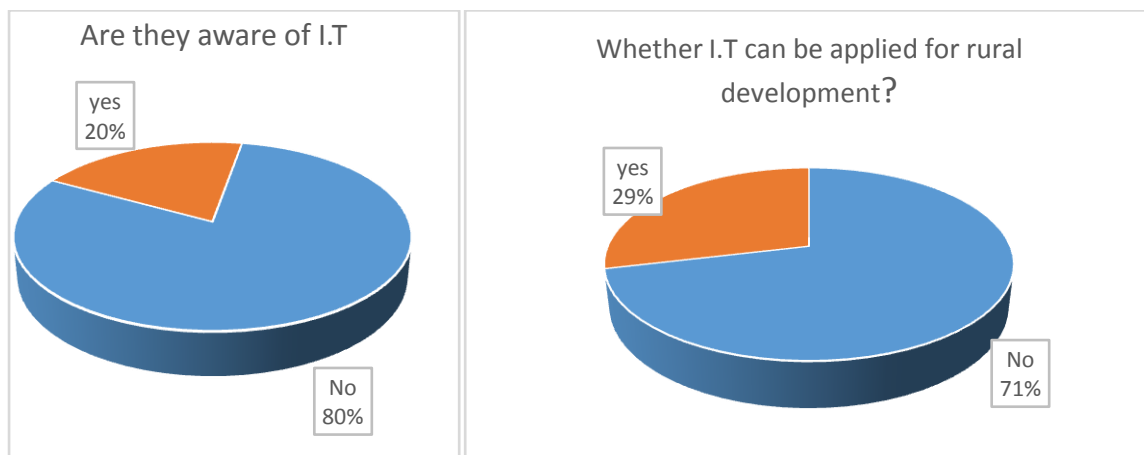
of wire network is costly, there wireless network infrastructure is the best choice. The workstations must have a focused coverage and publicly access. It aims to provide free service or service at low cost. Those must be set up in some convenient locations, accessible in walking distance.

METHODOLOGY

An analysis on rural public and students in Nere village near to panvel area was conducted .The survey includes the detailed study on questionnaire basis. The rural public is not aware of the application of Information Technology in different area like online tools for education, online transactions, online shopping, online billing payment, Ticket booking system etc. The students in rural area are not aware of the importance of Information Technology as a part of curriculum. Sample size of 200 people including students were analysed in rural area to understand to what extend the community is aware of the importance of I.T in their daily life.

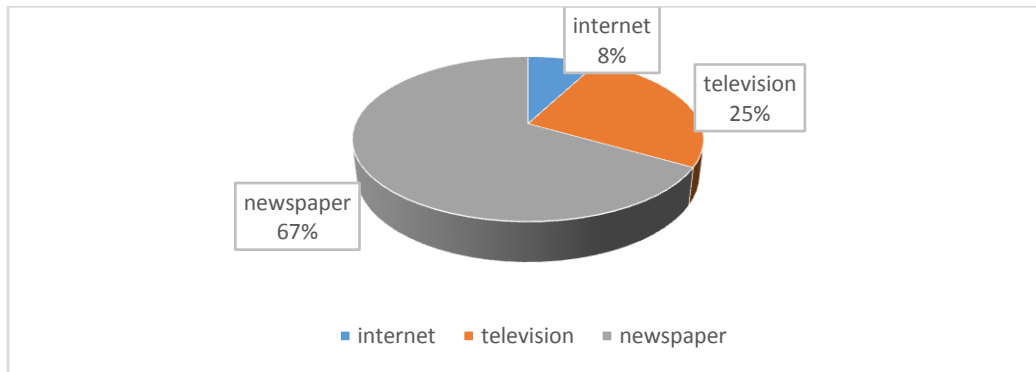
D) Survey conducted on rural public(at large)

Analysis1: Computer knowledge /I.T system?



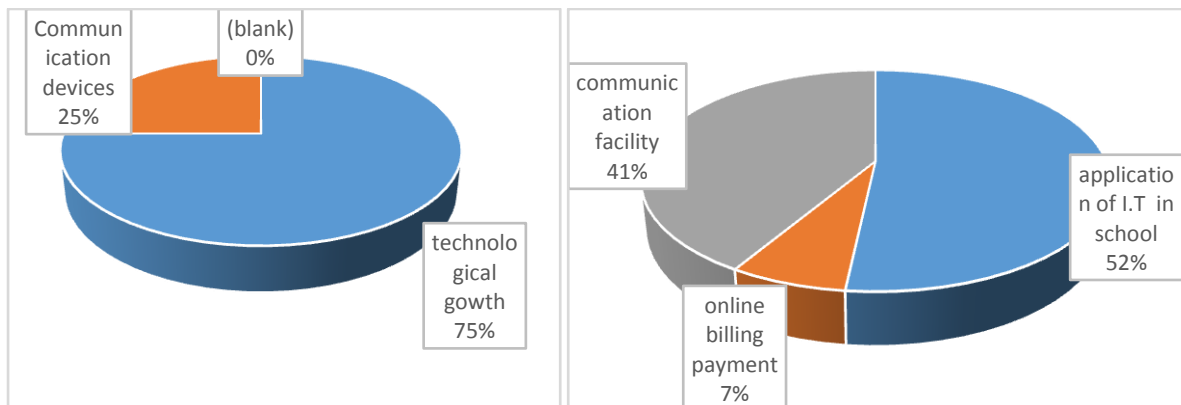
The major portion of the rural community are still not aware of the importance of information technology . They don't think I.T can change their way of living.

Analysis 2:Source of information(Daily news)



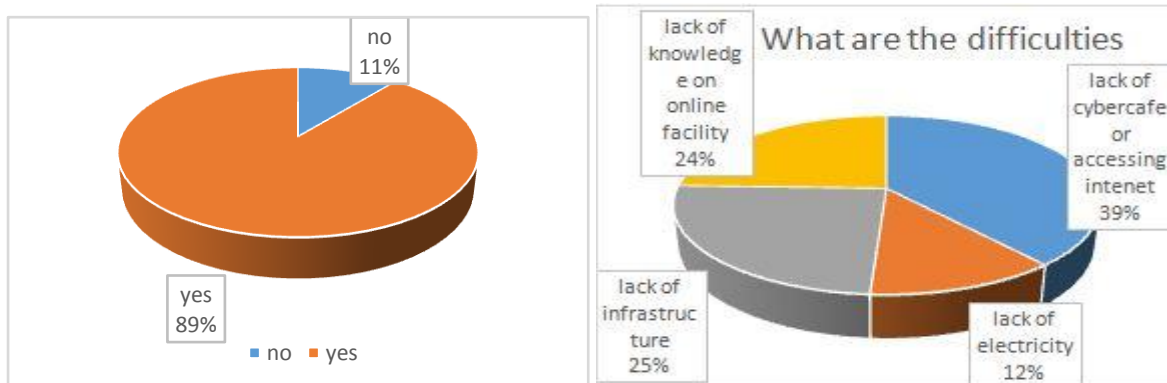
Most of the public in rural area are still collecting their primary/daily information from news papers and television only. They don't prefer internet as a medium for collecting information on daily basis and they are having so many obstacles to follow the internet applications in their life.

Analysis 3: Potentialities and benefits of Information communication Technology

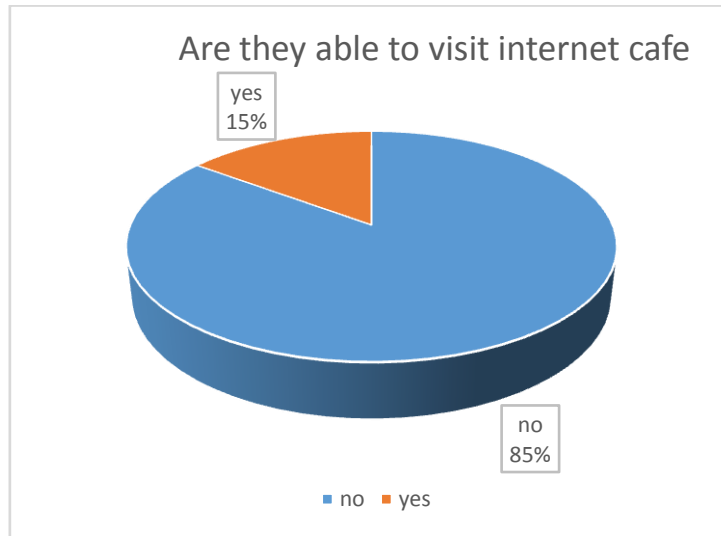


The community is not aware of all the benefits of I.T that now days we obtain. They still believe the application of I.T is in communication and only it is for students in school

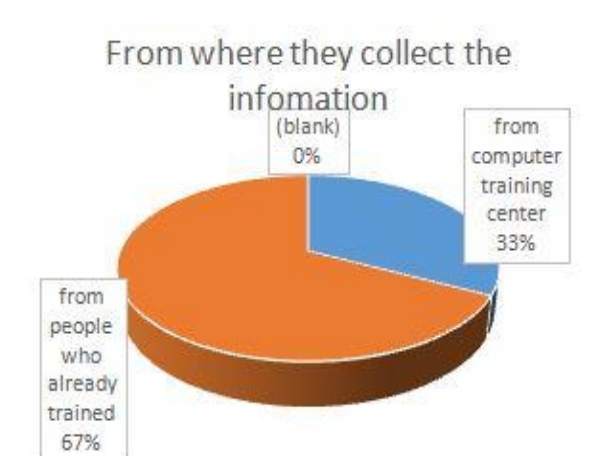
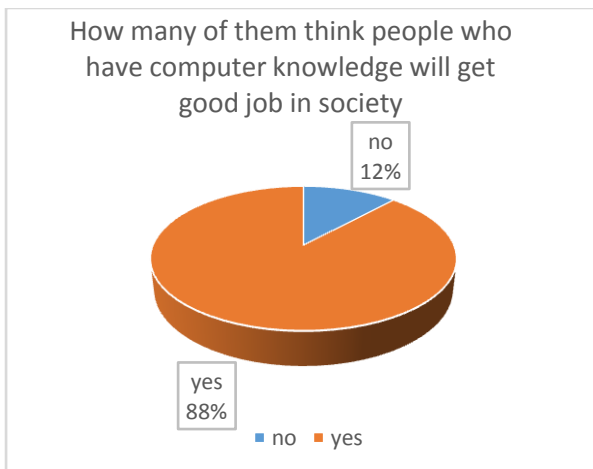
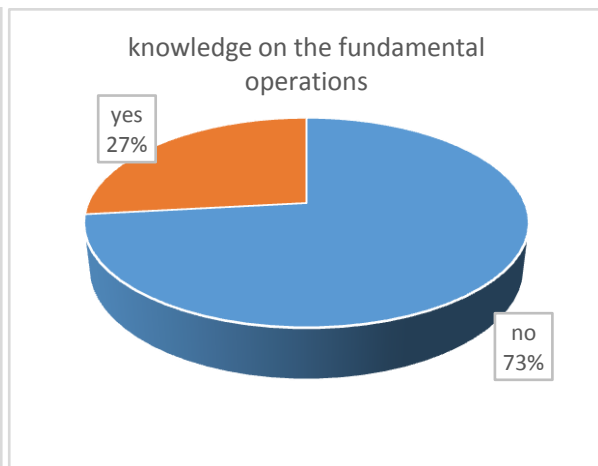
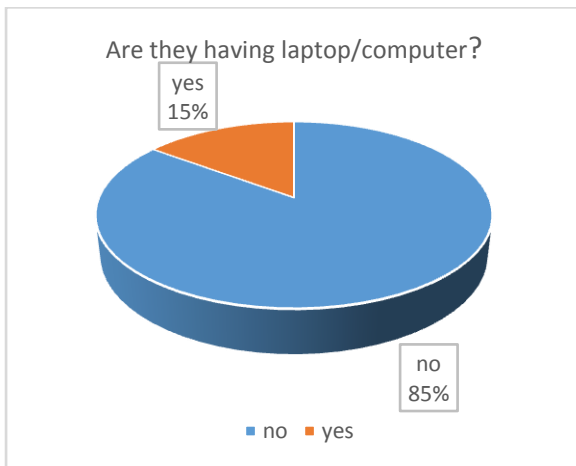
Analysis 4: Reasons for poor I.T connect



Lack of knowledge on internet, lack of infrastructure, lack of cybercafé are prime reasons for poor I.T connect. Second major reason is non-availability of electricity.



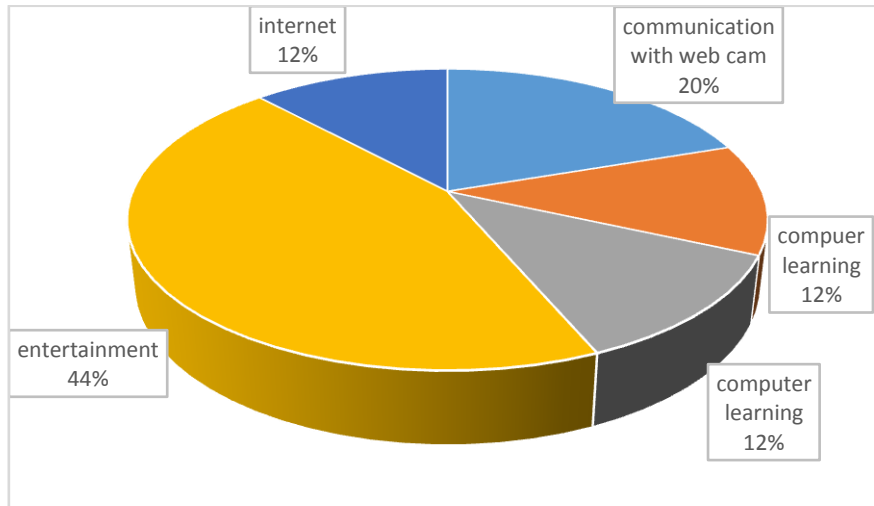
Analysis 5: Knowledge of computer among the rural community



88 % of the people are aware that computer knowledge will get them good jobs and opportunities better life. But most of them cannot afford computer nor has the government

provided any subsidy or schemes for procuring or distributing laptops or computers to school children. Hardly 27% of the sample have basic computer knowledge.

Analysis 6: Purpose of using computer

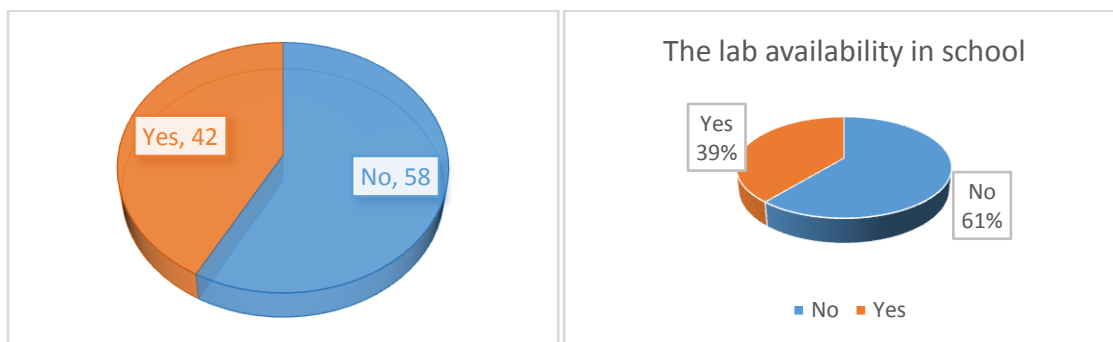


Almost half of the community believe computer is limited to entertainment only. They are not at all aware of the wide spread applications of I.T

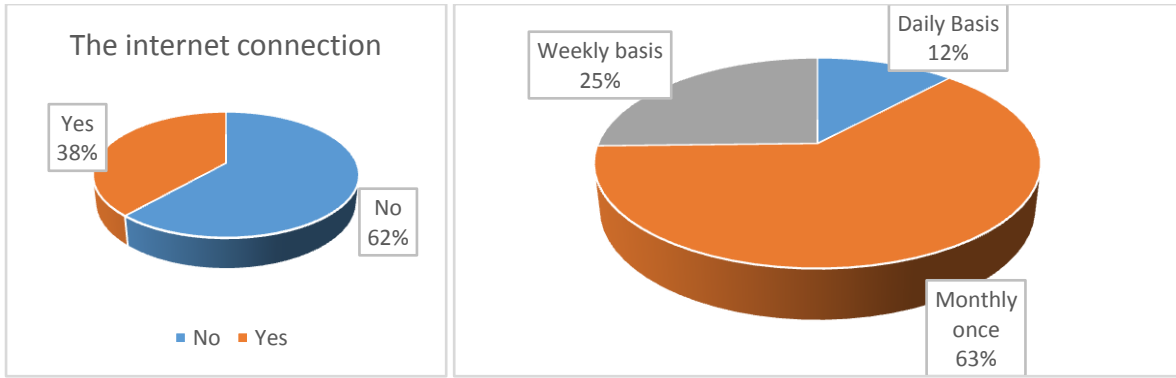
II) Survey conducted on Rural students:

Around 100 students of rural community who really face difficulties for connecting with the online tools and digital world is analysed.

Analysis1: Awareness on I.T as part of their curriculum

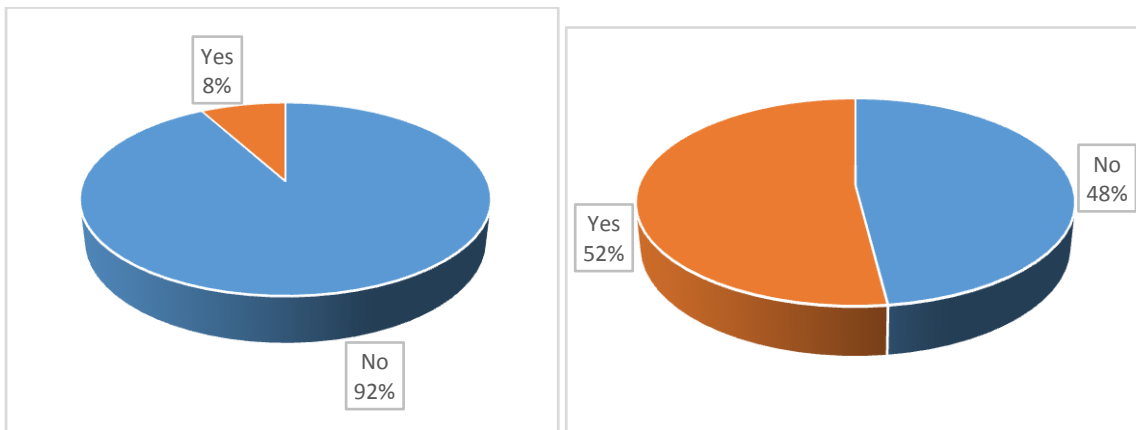


Most of the students (primary and secondary) in rural area are not aware of the importance of I.T as a part of their curriculum and the school infrastructure is limited to one or two class rooms , no proper computer labs or workstations.

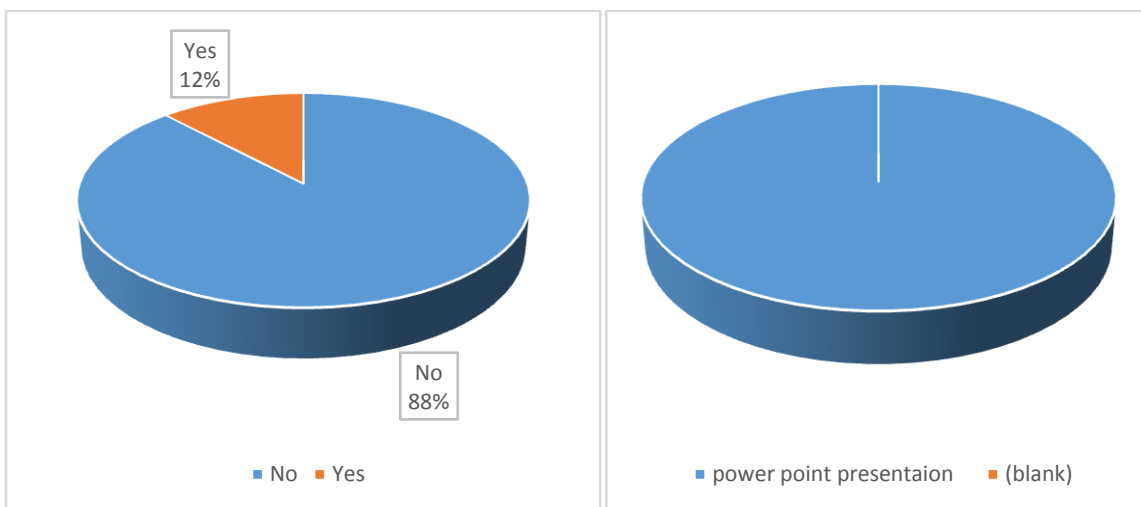


Students get opportunity to access computers hardly once a month. Computer configurations are outdated resulting in slow internet speed. Network connectivity is very poor. Therefore students loose interest in the subject and they can not easily connect to the digital world.

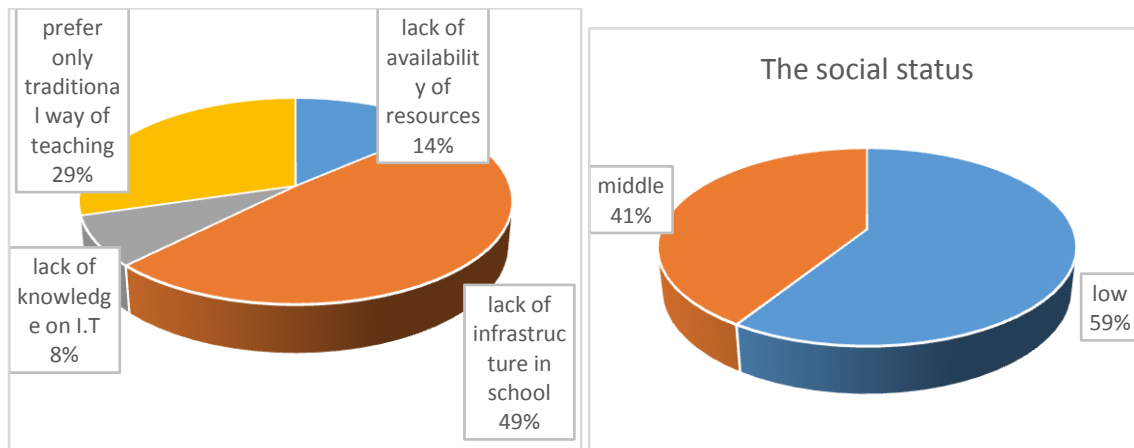
Analysis 2: Availability of online tools for teaching



Teachers are not qualified and lack basic connect with students. There is no availability of A.V rooms in schools and teachers are also not connected to the digital world as per the requirements or standards.



Analysis 3: Difficulties faced by teachers to use online tools for teaching



The teachers really face problems for connecting the students to online tools. They don't have the required infrastructure facility in class rooms like Audio-video technology for explaining the concepts to students. The teachers themselves cannot be connected with the information technology world and they are limited with the traditional way of teaching.

CONCLUSION

Effective utilization of Information communication Technology has the potential to make the rural communication in India prosperous. All efforts should be to guide the ICT initiatives with a focus on the socially deprived and economically disadvantaged sections that have not received adequate attention so far. Information systems are made of people and social structures and hence should be rooted in them. The reviews cited for the present study reveals that the inspiration regarding the applicability of technologies for the development of rural communities in India started in 80s of 20th century. The development of the rural areas is possible only through the proper dissemination of information/ knowledge to the target group is recognized in that period. The conventional methodologies have to be replaced by modern computer technologies. Latest developments in IT are still not easily accessible to a majority of the rural population

1. The government must provide the required fund for providing a good infrastructure in rural area for connecting to the digital world.
2. NGOs and government agencies should go hand in hand for development of computer literacy programmes in rural villages for their development.

3.Regular workshops and multiplicity of training programmes also support the use of IT as a device for employment.

4.Development of effective websites to enable rural community to learn everything at the click of a mouse.

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