

Acknowledgements

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The Indian experience of ICT has been mixed, some of the projects and initiatives have done well, many states have taken-up significant number of ICT initiatives for passing on the benefits to the rural poor. This project was taken under the auspices of The Planning Commission of India for studying some innovative ICT platforms, which benefit the rural poor and helps them in reducing their level of poverty. The cases were identified using the segment of their operation, organization involved in implementation of the platform, innovative feature of the project and the scope for replicability of the project. The cases were selected from the wide array of public and private initiatives. The projects that were selected for the study are, namely:

- The novel ICT platform implemented by GCOMMFL, which has helped the milk farmers in Gujarat to reduce their indebtedness and it has been replicated in many cooperative dairies across the country.
- Rural e-market hub developed by ITC Ltd which has assisted the farmers in supplying their produce directly to the company and increasing their knowledge base with the help of the company. The platform has helped in developing local leadership.
- E-Governance initiative in Pondicherry by MSSRF has used the ICT platform for efficient and effective governance in the local fishermen community so that they maximize their revenue.
- EID Parry embarked upon the ICT initiative by setting up 'Parry's Corner' to provide value-added services to the sugarcane farmers in Tamil Nadu. It helped them to reduce expenditure and increase the farm productivity.
- Kancheepuram Saree Industry experience proves, that an innovative ICT platform can be useful in revival of the traditional industry and help the weavers in increasing their productivity and capturing the market.

- Information kiosks setup with the low-cost technology helped in disseminating information to the poor people. This technology was incubated in IIT-Madras and through a public private partnership it was disseminated.
- CLRI used the ICT platform to revive the traditional art of making Kolhapuri footwear and increasing the competitiveness using computer aided design and Internet based transactions.
- ICT platform was used to help the weavers for increasing designs and their knowledge base. This platform has successfully revived the traditional craft of carpet weaving and improved the competitiveness.
- The low cost technology developed by IIT-Madras has increased the rural connectivity and acted as a facilitator for dissemination of information, help to communicate easily and obtain information.
- Tata Kisan Kendra is an initiative for providing value-added services such as “precision farming” for improving the farm-productivity. Using geographic information system they have been able to enhance the income of farmers.
- The ICT platform embarked by Apollo and Care Hospitals explains us, how the healthcare facility can be provided in the rural area using the telemedicine platform.

The project-study has found that, the innovative ICT platforms developed have been successful in delivering significant levels of benefits to the rural communities. ICT platforms have been used to transform and revive the traditional industries, also it is helpful in better dissemination of information using low-cost technologies and empowering the focus groups. ICT platforms have enormous potential to transform businesses, create new forms of business delivery and create new interaction spaces.