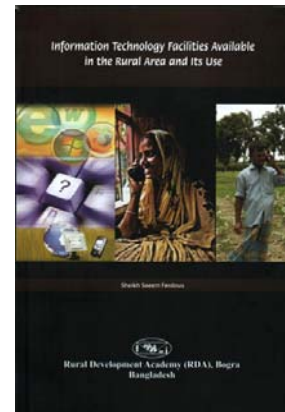


Executive Summary

1. Introduction

The research titled "Information Technology Facilities Available in the Rural Area and Its Use" was carried out in two Upazilas namely Mirzapur and Rampal. The objectives of the study were to:

- a. Make an inventory of facilities available on IT at rural areas;
- b. Determine their effects on the daily life of the rural people; and
- c. Identify contributions of IT on employment generation and socio economic development of rural people.



1.1 Inventory of IT facilities of the two Upazila was done. In doing so, discussions were made with the Upazila Nirbahi Officers and a cross section of people of the Upazila. The cross section of people included the shopkeepers, pedestrians, rickshaw-pullers and students. Out of the inventory list, 25 mobile phone owners engaged in business with mobile were selected purposively. Another 25 persons who used their own mobile phones were also selected purposively.

1.2 Three sets of questionnaires viz. one for inventory, second for the mobile phone owners and third for the mobile phone users were prepared and used for necessary data collection from them.

2. Findings :

Uses of IT and its contribution; According to owners' point of view

2.1 Both Mirzapur and Rampal upazilas have facilities of cyber café. Internet, land phone, fax and mobile phone are available in these cyber cafes. Among them, mobile phone alone occupied 64% and 92% of their facilities in Mirzapur and rampal upazila respectively.

2.2 There are number reasons for use of Internet, fax, mobile and land phone cited by the owners of its. Among them, sending scanned photos and speaking with relatives living abroad were the main reasons for Internet use; these were cited by 74% and 60% of total owners. Faxes were used mainly for sending official documents which were mentioned by 10% and 8% of the owners; Speaking with relatives and communication for business purposes were the main reasons for mobile use; these were pointed by 70% and 58% of the total owners. Likewise, 52% and 20% of the owners mentioned that communicating with husband or relatives working abroad and searching for jobs were the main reasons for land phone use.

2.3 Their total highest daily income was Tk.2113/- from selling of mobile cards. The next income was Tk.687/- from Internet use.

2.4 According to owners, IT has played role in ten (10) areas of development. To them, number of sellers and buyers has increased both in the markets of Mirzapur and Rampal and it has become easier for them to know the existing price of agricultural commodities all around.

2.5 There were also positive effects on marketing of daily necessary materials and other related products. Sales of sarees, lungies, readymade garments and bakery items have been increased in Mirzapur; while business on fish and fish items including prawn has been increased in Rampal.

- 2.6 Owners of both upazila are now satisfied having access to medical treatment. They can get advice from the doctors easily as well as feedback of the patient's condition. In the field of transport, they can know the time schedule of bus and trains. They can also know the reaching time and distance of the journey they make. They can now do quick transaction of money with safety (Table-9).
- 2.7 To them, education flourished through the use of internet. They can know the results of examination and can get information of tests. Both teachers and students are availing the benefit of new technologies (Table-12).
- 2.8 Traveling has become easier with the use of Its. It helped them know the exact time schedules of various buses and trains. With these information they worked out their plans.
- 2.9 IT use not only created the above facilities, but also created job opportunities in both upazila. It was found that forty four percent (44%) job was created by the use of mobile, fax and land phones in Mirzapur; thirty two (32%) of job was created by mobile in Rampal (Table-13).

Uses of IT and its benefit: According to Users

- 2.10 Fifty-six (56%) and 32% of the users of Mirzapur availed services of doing phone through internet and sending e-mail respectively. On the other hand, 16% of the users of Rampal used services of sending e-mail only. A similar percentage of beneficiaries did fax too (Table-14).

They used these devices for sending scanned photographs by e-mail, sending DV lottery forms by internet, sending scanned copy of passport by fax, communication with relatives/ friends living abroad by land phone and communication with relatives and family members by using mobile phones.

With regards to utilization of time 76% of the users of Mirzapur mentioned that they now got chance to exchange information with their relatives easily and quickly (Table-20). Similar was the case with Rampal, but their percentage was a bit higher (84%). In regards to money earned from use of Cyber Café 28% beneficiary of both upazila mentioned that they bought clothes and books with the money earned; while 22% mentioned that they purchased things of their likings.

- 2.11 With regard to economic development the users of Mirzapur have mentioned ten (10) points while eight (8) points by Rampal. According to them, they are getting opportunities to go abroad, and their status have been uplifted by purchasing lands through money received form abroad, and as a result their investment rate has increased (Table-22).
- 2.12 Social changes have also occurred in the life of users. Young people are becoming accustomed with new information technologies. Social bonds or confidence of relationship have become strengthened by exchanging messages with each other which was pointed by 38%. A similar percentage of them also pointed out that quick information have made their many social activities successful and rightly acceptable.
- 2.13 As a whole, impact of Its was found very positive in all respects. Along with this, some suggestions were made for proper use of Its, particularly the use of mobile phones. Of them, framing of mobile policy, good net-working, regular supply of pre-paid cards, equal call rate of mobiles of different companies and stopping of missed-calls need attention of concerned authority for proper solution.