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EMPOWERING SECONDARY EDUCATION THROUGH ICT INNOVATIONS

Vian Dhanda[*1]

[*1]Student, LBS Kota, India.

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ABSTRACT

The present study has been designed to study the Uses of Information Communication Technology (ICT) In Secondary Schools in Kota district, Rajasthan, India. Various Indian and foreign studies were reviewed. Descriptive Survey method has been used in this study. The sample consists of 100 students studying in secondary schools in the Kota district. A stratified random sampling technique was used for selecting the sample. The questionnaire was constructed for the students to find out their opinions on the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Secondary Schools. The data was analysed using statistical methods like mean, SD, and 't' tests. The scores obtained by different groups are compared across the variables like gender, medium, class, management and locality. The results are discussed in light of previous research studied; suggestions and recommendations for further research were also suggested.

Keywords: ICT, Secondary Schools.

I. INTRODUCTION

The incorporation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education is still in its infancy. Typically, technological advancements in education manifest through the creation and dissemination of textbooks and instructional materials, often spearheaded by organizations such as the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in New Delhi. However, much of the digital and printed content surpasses the reading comprehension levels of many learners, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Furthermore, certain simulation programs depict events in oversimplified and unrealistic manners, potentially leading to misconceptions among learners. Despite these challenges, the utilization of ICT in the teaching-learning process offers numerous advantages:

- Geographical barriers to learning are eliminated, granting learners full autonomy in selecting educational content.
- Access to multimedia resources reduces dependence on traditional textbooks, providing learners with online educational materials.
- ICT facilitates independent and flexible learning, allowing learners to progress at their own pace and undertake projects that apply curriculum concepts practically.
- It enables individuals to leverage their cognitive abilities to the fullest, promoting lifelong learning opportunities.

The emergence of ICT has transformed the learner's relationship with education, reducing dependence solely on teachers for formal instruction. Learners worldwide can now enrol in courses, pay fees electronically, and access educational resources via email and the Internet. Virtual classrooms are on the rise, facilitating communication among learners and experts across geographical boundaries. Multimedia technology has shifted the traditional teacher-centric model towards a learner-oriented approach, emphasizing personalized learning environments. Through multimedia, teachers can augment their instruction with various forms of content, including graphics, text, and video, to enhance understanding of complex concepts. Moreover, multimedia software allows trainees to study at their own pace from the comfort of their homes, promoting self-directed learning. Multimedia encyclopaedias provide detailed subject information, enriched with sound, colour, and video elements, along with interactive features for user engagement. Users can control multimedia programs through keystrokes, clicks, or touchscreen interactions, enhancing interactivity and user experience. Overall, the integration of ICT and multimedia technologies revolutionizes education, offering diverse and interactive learning opportunities for learners worldwide.

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1.1 Need and Significance of the Study: In today's interconnected world, computers have emerged as indispensable tools for accessing and sharing information globally. The advent of the Internet and the World Wide Web has exponentially increased the availability of knowledge, making it an essential resource for individuals worldwide. This phenomenon, albeit belatedly, has swiftly permeated the educational landscape in India, with schools and institutions incorporating computer education into their curriculum. Students are naturally drawn to and motivated by the use of computers, leading to their integration from higher education down to the primary level. Many schools have initiated computer education programs, initially focusing on imparting fundamental computer skills and basic programming languages. Thanks to the efforts of organizations such as Intel, Wipro, Infosys, Satyam, and Indian government initiatives in both the private and public sectors, computer education has evolved beyond mere instruction to be seamlessly integrated with other school subjects and disciplines. Consequently, there arises a need to evaluate the effectiveness of this integration in schools to inform future actions.

This study investigates the impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on the academic achievement of 9th and 10th-grade students in Kota, Rajasthan. Specifically, it examines whether ICT directly influences students' academic performance, serves as a learning tool, and facilitates teaching methods that enhance academic achievement. The findings of this study seek to ascertain whether the utilization of ICT significantly influences students' academic outcomes. As a developing nation, India requires a standardized secondary school system equipped with accessible learning resources that teachers can readily adapt and incorporate into their teaching practices. Such resources should be utilized regularly by both teachers and students to enhance the learning experience. This study endeavours to shed light on the role of ICT usage in students' academic achievements, providing valuable insights that can guide educational policies and practices. In essence, this study on the "Use of Information and Communication Technology in Secondary Schools of Kota District" endeavours to explore the relationship between ICT usage and student academic performance, offering a foundation for informed decision-making in educational settings.

II. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are:-

- To examine the Utilization of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Secondary Schools in Prakasam District.
- To investigate the perceived differences among students based on demographic variables such as gender, medium of instruction, grade level, school management, and locality regarding the Utilization of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Secondary Schools in Kota District

2.1 Hypotheses of the Present Study:

- There is no significant difference in the perceptions of male and female students regarding the Utilization of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Secondary Schools in Kota District.
- There is no significant difference in the perceptions of students across different grade levels regarding the Utilization of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Secondary Schools in Kota District.
- There is no significant difference in the perceptions of students based on the medium of instruction regarding the Utilization of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Secondary Schools in Kota District.
- There is no significant difference in the perceptions of students based on school management regarding the Utilization of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Secondary Schools in Kota District.
- There is no significant difference in the perceptions of students based on their locality regarding the Utilization of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Secondary Schools in Kota District.

Conduct of the Study

- **Study Design:** A survey method for descriptive research in this investigation was employed. The questionnaire was chosen as the primary tool for data collection, comprising 45 statements reflecting the perceptions of the students.

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- **Reliability and Validity**: To ensure reliability, the split-half method was utilized. The split-half reliability coefficient for students' perceptions of the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Secondary Schools was found to be 0.86. The validity of the scale was established through content and construct validity assessments.
- **Administration of the Tool:** The questionnaire was distributed to students, accompanied by clear instructions for completion. All respondents adhered to the instructions and filled out the questionnaire carefully after reading each item.
- **Data Collection:** The investigator personally visited the sampled schools to administer the questionnaire to the selected respondents. The data collected through the questionnaire and interview schedule were analysed.
- **Statistical Techniques Used:** For analytical purposes, statistical techniques such as means and standard deviations were employed. To investigate significant differences among socioeconomic variables, the investigator utilized 't'-tests and 'F'-tests (ANOVA) with the assistance of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Table 1: Significant difference among the perceptions of students based on their demographic variables towards Uses of Information Communication Technology (ICT) In Secondary Schools in Kota district

Variable	Category	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t/F-value	p-value
Gender	Boy	50	271.49	21.26	1.98	0.05
	Girl	50	273.63	19.04		
Class	Class - 9	50	270.20	21.91	2.94	0.00
	Class - 10	50	274.41	18.60		
Medium	English	50	273.52	20.15	3.20	0.00
	Hindi	50	267.62	20.29		
Management	Government	50	268.21	21.44	3.25	0.00
	Private	50	273.72	19.79		
Locality	Urban	50	273.96	20.05	2.39	0.02
	Rural	50	270.52	20.46		

- There are notable variations in students' perceptions based on their gender regarding the utilization of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Secondary Schools within the district, with female students exhibiting higher perceptions compared to their counterparts.
- Similarly, significant differences emerge in students' perceptions based on their class concerning the implementation of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Secondary Schools in Kota district, with 10th-grade students displaying higher perceptions than others.
- Furthermore, discernible differences in students' perceptions are observed based on their medium of instruction regarding the integration of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Secondary Schools in the Kota district, with students from English medium backgrounds indicating higher perceptions compared to others.
- Likewise, significant differences are noted in students' perceptions based on their School Management regarding the adoption of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Secondary Schools in the district, with students from private schools demonstrating higher perceptions than others.
- Moreover, noticeable disparities are identified in students' perceptions based on their locality regarding the application of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Secondary Schools in the Kota district, with students from urban areas indicating higher perceptions compared to others.

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III. RECOMMENDATIONS

In-service Programs on ICT Usage: These programs should be structured training sessions or workshops aimed at enhancing teachers' understanding and proficiency in using Information Communication Technology (ICT) as part of the teaching-learning process. Teachers would receive hands-on training, practical demonstrations, and guidance on effectively integrating ICT tools, software, and resources into their classroom instruction. This would empower them to leverage technology to create engaging learning experiences and cater to diverse learning styles.

Awareness Programs on ICT: Awareness programs serve to inform and educate teachers about the benefits, potential, and practical applications of ICT in education. Workshops, seminars, and conferences can be organized where experts and educators share insights, success stories, and best practices related to ICT integration. These events provide a platform for teachers to learn about innovative teaching methodologies, digital resources, and emerging trends in educational technology.

ICT Enhancement Programs: These programs are tailored to enhance teachers' ICT skills and competencies. They go beyond basic training and focus on advanced techniques, tools, and strategies for effectively utilizing technology in teaching. ICT enhancement programs may include specialized courses, certifications, or professional development opportunities that enable teachers to master specific ICT tools, platforms, or methodologies relevant to their subject areas or teaching contexts.

Utilization of ICT in Evaluation: Teachers should be educated on how ICT can be effectively incorporated into the evaluation and assessment processes. This includes using digital assessment tools, online quizzes, automated grading systems, and digital portfolios to evaluate student performance, track progress, and provide feedback. By leveraging ICT for assessment, teachers can streamline evaluation processes, gain insights into student learning outcomes, and personalize instruction based on individual needs.

ICT Skills for All Teachers: Regardless of their academic background or subject expertise, all teachers should be equipped with foundational knowledge and skills in ICT. This ensures that every educator is proficient in basic computer operations, digital literacy, and the use of educational technology tools relevant to their teaching responsibilities. By equipping teachers with ICT skills, schools can foster a culture of technology integration and ensure that every classroom is conducive to modern, technology-enhanced learning experiences.

In summary, these recommendations aim to empower teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively harness the potential of ICT in education, thereby enhancing teaching quality, student engagement, and learning outcomes.

3.1 Recommendations for Further Research

As the educational landscape continues to evolve in response to technological advancements, it is imperative to identify and explore avenues for further research that can enhance instructional practices and student outcomes. The following recommendations outline potential areas for future investigation:

- Exploring Innovative Pedagogical Approaches: Future research endeavours could focus on exploring and evaluating innovative pedagogical approaches that integrate Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into teaching and learning. This may include investigating the effectiveness of methodologies such as blended learning, flipped classrooms, and inquiry-based instruction in different educational settings. By examining the implementation of these approaches and their impact on student engagement, motivation, and academic achievement, researchers can provide valuable insights for educators seeking to optimize their instructional practices.
- Assessing the Efficacy of Educational Technologies: Research studies can delve into the efficacy of specific educational technologies and digital tools in enhancing student learning outcomes. This may involve conducting rigorous empirical studies to evaluate the effectiveness of software applications, online learning platforms, educational apps, and interactive multimedia resources. By examining factors such as usability, accessibility, and learning impact, researchers can inform educators and policymakers about the most effective technological solutions for supporting teaching and learning in diverse educational contexts.
- Investigating the Role of Digital Literacy: There is a growing need to investigate the role of digital literacy in facilitating meaningful engagement with technology-enhanced learning environments. Future research could explore how students develop digital literacy skills, including information literacy, media literacy, and

digital citizenship, and the impact of these skills on their academic success and lifelong learning. Additionally, studies could examine strategies for fostering digital literacy competencies among educators and students, thereby empowering them to navigate and critically evaluate digital information sources.

- Examining Equity and Access in Technology Integration: Research efforts should address issues of equity and access related to the integration of technology in education. This may involve examining disparities in technology access and usage among different student populations, including those from marginalized communities or underserved regions. By identifying barriers to technology access and proposing strategies for promoting digital equity, researchers can contribute to creating more inclusive learning environments where all students have equal opportunities to benefit from ICT tools and resources.
- Investigating the Impact of Emerging Technologies: With the rapid evolution of technology, there is a need to investigate the impact of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and blockchain, on teaching and learning. Future research could explore the potential applications of these technologies in education, their effectiveness in enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes, and the ethical considerations associated with their use. By staying abreast of technological advancements and their implications for education, researchers can inform evidence-based decision-making and pedagogical innovation.

In conclusion, these recommendations highlight promising areas for future research that can contribute to advancing our understanding of technology integration in education and its impact on student learning. By addressing these research priorities, scholars can play a pivotal role in shaping the future of teaching and learning in the digital age.

IV. CONCLUSION

Gender-based variations in students' perceptions towards the utilization of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Secondary Schools within the Kota district were evident, with female students exhibiting higher perceptions compared to others. Noteworthy differences were observed in students' perceptions based on their class concerning the implementation of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Secondary Schools in the district, with 10th-grade students displaying higher perceptions than others. Significant disparities in students' perceptions based on their medium of instruction regarding the integration of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Secondary Schools in the Kota district were identified, with students from English medium backgrounds indicating higher perceptions compared to others. Notable variations in students' perceptions based on their School Management regarding the adoption of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Secondary Schools in the Kota district were noted, with students from private schools demonstrating higher perceptions than others. Discernible differences in students' perceptions based on their locality concerning the application of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Secondary Schools in the district were recognized, with students from urban areas indicating higher perceptions compared to others.

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