

Chapter XIV

E–Halli:

An Opportunity to Become Rural Entrepreneurs

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ABSTRACT

ICTs are increasingly being recognized by the people across the globe as essential tools of development – tools that can empower them, enhance skills and increase productivity. Today, the realities have changed. The world is not what it was during their times. Technology, science and other aspects of affluence have widened the gulf between rich and poor. On the other hand, they have also brought the world closer, in terms of connectivity. This has resulted in stupendous growth in terms of information exchange, business, education, agriculture, infotainment, inventions and better contact between places and people. The concept that the authors are about to present represents this very dream of bringing villages, towns, and cities closer, in more ways than tying them by technology. This chapter mainly reviews the conceptual frame work of e-halli. The second section deals with the e-halli as a business perspective.

INTRODUCTION

We need to have a system that coordinates rural knowledge and information networks would be useful in helping get development information circulated on agriculture and non-agricultural subjects. Communications support for rural development is challenged by the need for financial

sustainability of the systems established. It is suggested three essentials for rural development through Information systems: one, organize networks of rural knowledge and information centers for rural development that would respond to observed and expressed rural development needs; two, develop appropriate ICT programs, which continually install and maintain new

information and communication technologies, especially computers with Internet access; three, establish mechanisms for linkages with public and private sector agencies and organizations, institutes and centers.

The information system (*e-halli*) is intended as a vehicle for sharing ideas, knowledge and information with the various stakeholders addressing the causes, and seeking solutions, for rural development.

ABOUT E-HALLI

Though cities depend on villages for every thing needed for survival like food grains and marketing of every kind of consumer products but they have an edge over information needed for all such activities. The villages are forced to depend on cities to get this information at the time of the need.

This has created an imbalance in the flow of information in the system and is affecting the overall development of our nation. This system has to be balanced in order to bridge the gap between the resources and the end point of the usage.

Based on this thinking, the initiative has been taken to develop a portal which can focus on bridging the gap. In order to bridge this divide, *e-halli* (which means electronic village in Kannada) project has been taken up. This *e-halli* project is based on the concept PURA (Providing Urban amenities in Rural Area), the dream of taking technology and its benefits to rural areas.

“e-grama” is basically an Intranet Portal, having some static and dynamic pages with Intranet e-mailing facility among different users of the Intranet. The *e-halli* project implemented at Central part of Karnataka as a pilot project to bring the benefits of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to all the rural mass.

Before venturing into an unknown world of information flow and its effects, detailed studies were conducted to understand the needs of

the rural people. Based on these studies, a more scientific, practical, relevant and state-of-the art project called *e-halli* was conceptualized and is being run as a pilot project in about 10 villages across Karnataka.

The *e-halli* project is conceptualized and implemented by Yeshaswini Nagara Hagu Grameena Abhivruddhi Parishat (R), a Non Governmental Organization. This IT-enabled project will not only help bridge the growing digital divide, but also increase computer literacy of those living in rural areas. It is also expected to generate more employment opportunities in these regions and reduce migration of educated unemployed youths to cities.

There are four levels of operations:

- Support Network
- Software Network
- Economic Support Network
- Research Support Network

Support Network: The project will be implemented with the basic structure shown in Figure 1.

Software Network: A core team of professionals with expertise in software development are developing the software. The software developed has the capability of providing AT THE POINT DATA ENTRY, a new inventive methodology where a window is provided at different information points like banks, Government offices etc., from where the information is directly entered in the formats and are readily available at the *e-halli* centers immediately. For ex: the tour program of District Collector (DC), once it is entered in the formats at the source, it can reach every *e-halli* instantaneously. This process avoids even the slightest delay in information dissipation and becomes more authentic. See Figure 2.

Economic Support Network: A specialized team who take care of supporting the VSP in various forms of revenue generation for the sustainability

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