About Bangladesh

Bangladesh emerged as an independent and sovereign country in 1971 following a nine month war of liberation. It is one of the largest deltas of the world with a total area of 147,570 sq. km. With a unique communal harmony, Bangladesh has a population of about 140 million, making it one of the densely populated countries of the world. The literacy rate of Bangladesh people is 43.1%. Over 98% of the people speak in Bengali, English however is widely spoken (National Web Portal of Bangladesh, 2009).

Bangladesh is among the poorest countries in the world. The UNDP lists it as number 146 according to the Human Development Index 2009, a composite of development and human development indicators. The per capita income is $554 (BBS, 2008). More than 35 million people in Bangladesh, around a fifth of the total population, are currently living below the poverty line.

ICT in Bangladesh

1. First mainframe computer came to Bangladesh in 1964.
2. Internet came late in Bangladesh, with UUCP e-mail beginning in 1993 and IP connectivity in 1996.
3. Recently Bangladesh Government has adopted a national ICT Policy-2009 which includes action items for realizing the goals of national development.

Earlier national ICT Policy was published in 2002 aiming at building an ICT driven knowledge based society by the year 2010. National ICT Policy-2009 consists of 10 broad objectives, 56 strategic themes following a nine month war of liberation. It is one of the largest deltas of the world. Its literacy rate of Bangladesh people is 43.1%. Over 98% of the people speak in Bengali, English however is widely spoken (National Web Portal of Bangladesh, 2009).

Digital Divide

In Bangladesh digital divide exists between Urban and Rural Population

Rich and Poor

Gender

Government and Private Organizations

Organization in Dhaka and Organization in Other Districts of Bangladesh

Mainstream and the Tribal populations

Why Digital Divide in Bangladesh?

1. Lack of adequate funds to introduce ICT based services in different sectors
2. Lack of infrastructural facilities
3. Technological backwardness
4. Absence of ICT in the school, college and university curriculum
5. Socio-economic status
6. Illiteracy
7. Lack of awareness program
8. Lack of government support
9. Corruption in different development project of Bangladesh etc.

Digital Divide in Library and Information Centre in Bangladesh: A Case Study of University of Dhaka Library

PSTN Phone Subscribers in Bangladesh


The total number of PSTN Phone Subscribers has reached 1603.187 thousand at the end of November 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mobile Operator</th>
<th>Number of Subscribers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grameen Phone Ltd. (G)</td>
<td>22.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shyama (Bangalnet)</td>
<td>8.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drascom Telecom Bangladesh Ltd.</td>
<td>12.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBLT (Citycall)</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teltex</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecentrum</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Digital Divide among Rural and Urban Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>Access to</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>Mobile Phone</td>
<td>Mobile Phone</td>
<td>Mobile Phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>22.75%</td>
<td>0.17%</td>
<td>0.81%</td>
<td>22.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>31.26%</td>
<td>2.85%</td>
<td>7.26%</td>
<td>31.26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Digital Divide among Urban and Rural Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access to</td>
<td>0.81%</td>
<td>22.75%</td>
<td>22.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Phone</td>
<td>0.81%</td>
<td>22.75%</td>
<td>22.96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Initiatives to Bridge Digital Divide by the Government of Bangladesh and Other Organizations

1. Considering the importance of ICT, the Government of Bangladesh has declared a national ICT Task Force called ICT Task Force with a Chairperson with a view to offering administrative and secretarial support to the ICT Task Force in planning, designing, and implementing various ICT projects, particularly e-Government projects. A good number of e-government project has been implemented by this Task Force.

2. Government of Bangladesh pledged to convert Bangladesh into ‘Digital Bangladesh’ by 2021 which is the 50th anniversary of the independence of Bangladesh.

3. Government has taken huge program to implement ICT related activities in almost all government sector as well as planning to spread ICT service to all.


5. From this portal it is possible to get almost all information on the government of Bangladesh. It is an inclusive network, where any individual or an institution committed to bring ICT to the doorsteps of the rural poor and to the marginalized people of the society can be a member or partner. The network is based on the idea of maximizing the advantages of information and communication technologies (ICTs) through sharing of experiences and knowledge among different organisations of the organisation.

6. The portals are running very successfully.

7. Government has declared the 5th of July as International Day of Information and Communication Technologies.


9. The portals are running very successfully.


Role of Libraries in Eliminating Digital Divide

1. Libraries are sources of information and knowledge for the poor as an individual or an institution committed to bring ICT to the doorsteps of the rural poor and to the marginalized people of the society.

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References

1. Ministry of Telecommunication, Bangladesh: Bangladesh Telecommunication Network (BTTN) is a coalition of organisations for fostering telecentre movement in Bangladesh. It is an inclusive network, where any individual or an institution can be a member or partner. The network is based on the idea of maximizing the advantages of information and communication technologies (ICTs) through sharing of experiences and knowledge among different organisations of the organisation.

2. The South Asian (2001, February). South Asian success story: Bangladesh. It is an inclusive network, where any individual or an institution can be a member or partner.

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