ABSTRACT

The international discourse on development communication and the role of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as facilitators of social change is a subject of continuous debate, engagement and policy interventions shifting from perspectives of ‘technological determinism’ to ‘social shaping of technologies’. In India, following international trends, ICTs have been ‘adapted’ for social change for alleviating deprivations of poverty, hunger and gender inequality.

Priorities set by policy planners, goaded by the dangling technologies, influence the conceptualization, design and execution of such ICT for Development (ICT4D) projects. How do such initiatives shape the communicative ecology down to the network and delivery channel? Their interface with indigenous communication patterns forms an interesting area of enquiry. The present research project attempts to look into these intervening contexts where an ICT for development project is enshrined in the Community Information Centers (CICs) of Northeast India. Its implementation in a resource crunched region is an institutional process of constant negotiation and conflict with ground realities. Through case studies this thesis unravels CICs within the framework of an ambitious ICT4D initiative. Policy analysis at central and state government levels through interactions with multiple stakeholders and participatory field studies in the selected districts formed the methodology of this study.