

ABSTRACT
PARALLEL WORKING SESSION

OUTREACH & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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**Dazzling Technology; Unequal world; Seismic shift in Higher Education:
Viz a Viz, Education in Rural India; Problems & Prospects**

In the backdrop of rapid technological innovations and its use in promotion of educational goals, making the very delivery of education possible in remote communities, living in developing and under-developed countries, is a million dollar question. This is a challenge for the millennium. Can we meet it, unless we really understand what, actual reality is? This is an effort to present a case, out of India, which are eye openers for all of us and all those whole, which aspire for global equity.

India, the heterogeneous, multilayer, country, accommodates 17% of world population. Over 70% is, agro based rural population & 33% live below poverty line. Over 27 million population is between 6-14 years of age, 64.8% literacy and 55% is female literacy. As against high enrolments at primary level, the gross drop out rate is 40.7% with add on 25% teacher/student absenteeism. 13.1% rural male, 5.77% rural female educated up to primary level. 6% of rural male, 1.67% rural female educated up to middle level. 2.70% rural male and hardly 1% rural female educated up to matriculation. 0.29% rural male, 0.04% rural female educated up to graduation. Only 7.68% computers support, 1.04% of Internet connectivity, 4.35% spent on education, as against targeted 6% GDP...

This scenario is the result of number of factors. Poverty is the single largest factor, followed by, lack of infrastructure, curriculum unconnected to employability, minimal expenditure on education, single room schools and single teacher schools, no electricity in 74.77% schools, compounded by 15 hour power shedding, meagre Information and Communication Technology (ICT) support, one can wonder when, Rural India will, dazzle with technology?

How can we empower remote communities? The prospects lie in addressing pressing issues diagonally and strategically, supported by strong political will and committed leadership, 10-12% of GDP expenditure on education, targeted infrastructure development, with technology driven, employability driven, innovative curriculum. Redefining The Total Literacy Project, through Public Private deliberations, extension of Govt. funding also to private institutions, universalizing Millennium Development Goals, empowering the women & the under-privileged holds the key. If we are to survive in this millennium, the global community, must course together, building open educational recourses and participatory learning system to help to create, clusters of villages linked to nearby urban centers with excellent infrastructure, internal connectivity, high bandwidth internet connectivity, ICT support and training, wherein, Quality Centers of Education shall provide the globally competent education & skills