ICT – A Tool for Professional Graduates to Enhance Speaking Skills: Case Study

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Abstract - Technology has brought revolutionary changes in the present education system. With the advancement of Science and Technology, the new era of "Digital Age" demands for the professional communication. As the world is moving rapidly into digital media and information, various innovative technologies had been introduced to teach speaking skills with the usage of ICT in the 21st century. As Present education system aims for the quality in higher education with ICT tools, this paper aims for the Innovative methods for improving speaking skills and employability of engineering graduates. It also focuses on the challenges and issues faced both by the teacher, student and the administrators. The article investigates on the student's knowledge on ICT and its impact on speaking skills. Data was driven in the form of questionnaire in three areas viz. urban, semi-urban and rural in Anantapuramu district of Rayalaseema region, Andhra Pradesh. The findings reveal that there are lack of resources and knowledge on ICT. It also found that there is no proper usage of ICT tools in the language class rooms, no in-service teacher training and there should be a change in the curriculum which has to be implemented in the real time teaching and learning process.

Keywords: Innovative, ICT in learning, Digital Age, Quality Education.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the main keys to economic development and improvements in human welfare. Globalization and technological change – processes that have accelerated in tandem over the decade have created a new global economy "powered by technology, fuelled by information and driven by knowledge". The emergence of this new global economy has serious implications for the nature and purpose of educational institutions. Education system must promote "learning to learn" i.e. the acquisition of knowledge and skills that make possible continuous learning over the lifetime.

21st century is the age of information and communication technology. All over the globe, there is a trend to use ICT in the teaching learning process. "The illiterate of the 21st century, "according to futurist Alvin Toffler, "will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn". The International Labour Organization defines the requirements for education and training in the new global economy simply as "Basic Education for All", "Core work Skills for All", and "Life Long Learning for All".

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition: ICT is an acronym that stands for

• Information
• Communication
• Technology

The term ICT is defined as "forms of technology used for creating, displaying, storing, manipulating and exchanging information". Technology has brought revolutionary changes in society and its surroundings in a huge number of ways. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have become one of the fundamental building blocks of modern society. Integrating the basic skills and concepts of ICT into the teaching learning process has become an inevitable part of the core of education. Use of ICT is often referred to as the third revolution in the dissemination of knowledge. Higher education in the country is undergoing a major transformation in terms of increase in accessibility and quality. This transition is further influenced by the developments in ICTs which needs to be integrated in the education sector to bring about profound implications for the whole learning process. There had been growing need and demand of quality Higher Education all over the world since the last few decades.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) which include radio and television, as well as newer digital technologies such as computer and the Internet – have been touched potentially powerful enabling tools for educational change and reform. When used appropriately, different ICTs are said to help expand access to education,

strengthen the relevance of education to the increasingly digital workplace, and raise educational quality by, among others, helping make teaching and learning into an engaging, active process connected to real life.

ICT refers to computer-based technologies such as PCs, laptops, tablets, smart phones and latest softwares and internet based technologies such as e-mail, websites, facebook, twitter, podcasts etc for the purpose of teaching English and learning. (Davies & Hewe, 2009). The benefits of ICT, its applications in English language learning and attitude towards it use have to review before analyzing the study.

However, the experience of introducing different ICTs in the classroom and other educational settings all over the world over the past several decades suggests that the full realization of the potential educational benefits of ICTs is not automatic. The effective integration of ICTs into the educational system is a complex, multifaceted process that involves not just technology – indeed, given enough initial capital, getting the technology is the easiest part! But also curriculum and pedagogy, institutional readiness, teacher competencies, and long term financing among others.

2.2 ICT in Education: ICT has many advantages in education. ICT is a powerful tool in presenting or representing information in various ways like graphs, maps, pictures, and multimedia. It makes the learner realistic and lively and relax them to learn different topics and task more actively, because they learn by applying the technology to a task rather than by being directly "instructed" by the technology (Grabe & Grabe, 2005).Since the benefits that ICT brings to English language learners are motivation enhancement (Razmah Mahmood, 2005 & Schoepp & Erogul, 2001), learner Free and acquisition of skills have been in practiced in many parts of the world. (Buabeng-andoh, 2012).

Studies on ICT have drawn a number of reasons like affordability of computers, Internet Connectivity, telephone and electricity infrastructure, knowledge of computers, training on ICT are found which affect students not using ICT in the right manner because of lack of technical knowledge on ICT, technophobia and wrong perceptions on ICT. However, ICT role in teaching and learning process is very important and its impact in teaching and learning process in the globalization. (Adriana Alexandru, 2007).

The potential of each technology varies according to how it is used. Haddad and Draxler identify at least five levels of technology use in education i.e.

- ❖ Presentation
- ❖ Demonstration
- ❖ Drill and practice
- ❖ Interaction and
- ❖ Collaboration

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aims to fulfill the gap by collecting data in the form of questionnaire among urban, semi-urban and rural students of Anantapuramu district of Rayalseema region of undergraduate engineering in the following objectives.

- ☞ Whether the students have knowledge on ICT?
- ☞ To what extent the learner is making use of ICT?
- ☞ Do the students are using ICT for learning?
- ☞ Do the ICT tools help the students to improve their speaking skills?
- ☞ Challenges faced by the students in using ICT?

The purpose of this paper is to investigate, interpret and analyze the methods employed in this study in order to enhance the English Speaking Skills.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study used a sample of 360 students in different colleges of urban, semi-urban and rural (232 female students and 128 male students) at Srinivasa Ramanujan Institute of Technology, JNTUA University, Gates Engineering College, Anantapur and Tadipatri College of Engineering, Tadipatri. The IV B.Tech students who are ready for the industry and taking courses of Placements, Communication Skills, Academic Writing and Verbal Ability are involved. The questionnaires were distributed among all the students of ECE, EEE and CSE with the help of teachers in their leisure time and analyzed.

The questionnaire was designed on different aspects of ICT related information. The first part was designed on the basic knowledge of ICT? The second and third part of the questionnaire focused on how ICT tools helps to improve their speaking skills and how competent they are in using other ICT tools?

V. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

5.1 Do they have knowledge on ICT Tools? The findings reveal (Table 5.1) that the (67%) of urban students have knowledge on ICT tools, semi-urban (53%) and rural with 43%. Though they have knowledge on ICT tools, the rural students do not have proper infrastructure .Only (29%) of rural students says yes and (83%) in Urban. As the electricity and telephony are the major elements required for ICT tools, only 28% of rural students are facing the problem and in semi-urban (22%) of students are facing and the remaining in the urban. On the other hand, the students are not provided with accessing of Internet in the colleges, where (62%) of rural students are having and semi-urban with (33%) and even the teachers in rural areas do not make use of ICT in classrooms which reveals that only (32%) of the teachers in rural make use of it and (17%, 38%) of the teachers are not using in Urban and Semi-urban respectively. However, they have knowledge on ICT tools, only with the Internet and social media but

not the recent programs funded by the government to work on Internet.

Table 5.1 Knowledge on ICT Tools

Item	Urban		semi-Urban		Rural	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Do you have knowledge on ICT tools	80	40	63	57	51	69
Do you have proper infrastructure to use ICT tools?	99	21	77	43	35	85
Is there availability of electricity and telephony?	108	12	94	26	87	33
Do you have an access to Internet to colleges?	113	7	81	39	46	74
Does your teacher uses ICT in classrooms?	100	20	75	45	38	82
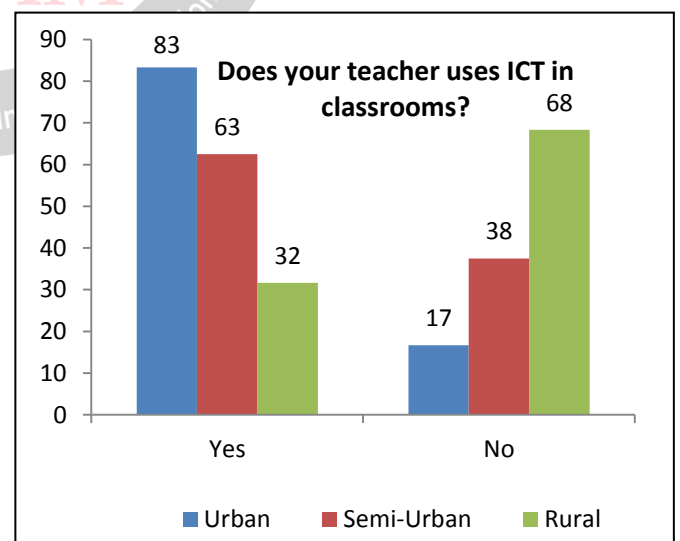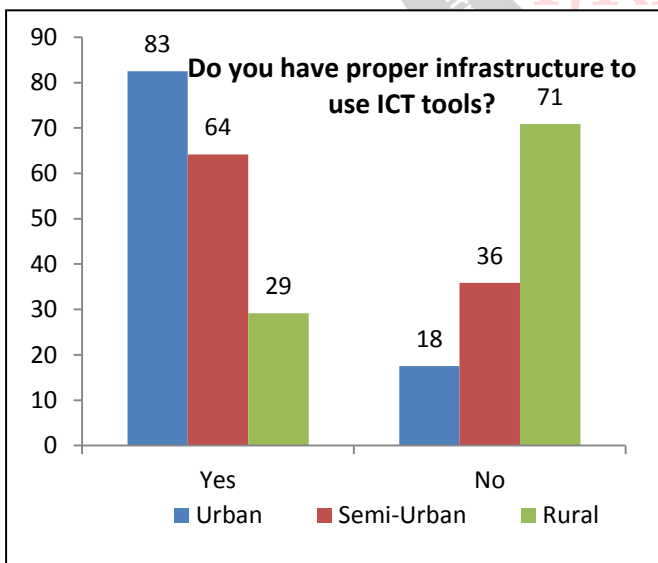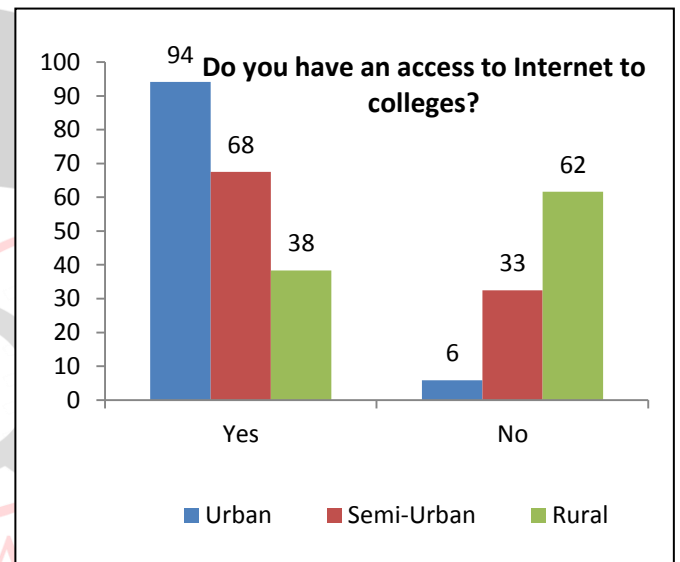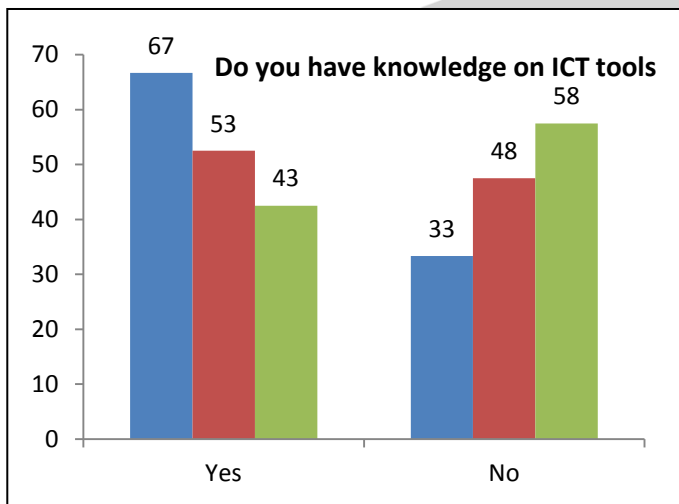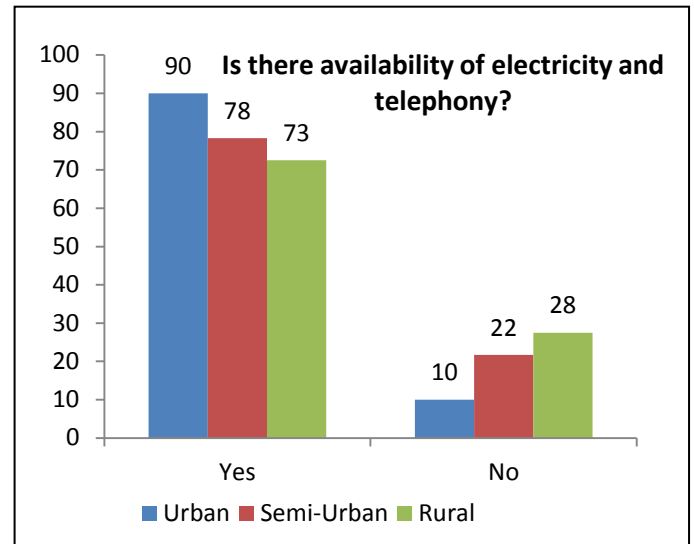
Table 5.2 ICT and Speaking Skills

Item	Yes			To some Extent			No		
	Urban	Semi-Urban	Rural	Urban	Semi-Urban	Rural	Urban	Semi-Urban	Rural
Does ICT helps you in improving English Speaking Skills	41	49	26	70	43	22	9	28	72
Are you familiar with online Courses	54	33	24	28	48	12	38	39	84
Do you use online dictionaries for improving your language	28	48	8	65	42	12	27	30	100
Do you use social networking sites to improve your language	22	18	10	18	11	23	80	91	97
Do you think your syllabus support you to improve your speaking skills	57	63	65	42	35	25	21	22	30

Are you familiar with online Courses
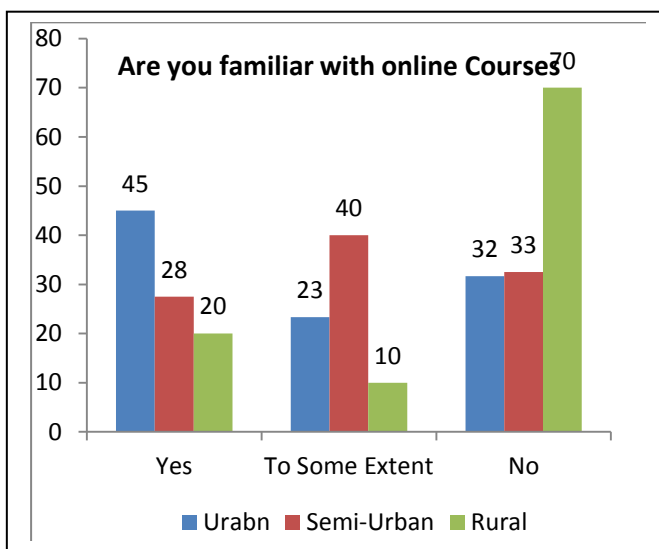
Coming to the response towards are you familiar with online courses, the following findings are (70%) of the rural students say no, on the other hand, (45%) of urban students say yes and (40%) of the semi-urban students say to some extent. If they fail to have knowledge on online courses, it is difficult for them to browse the latest courses and gain knowledge.

Do you use social networking sites to improve your language

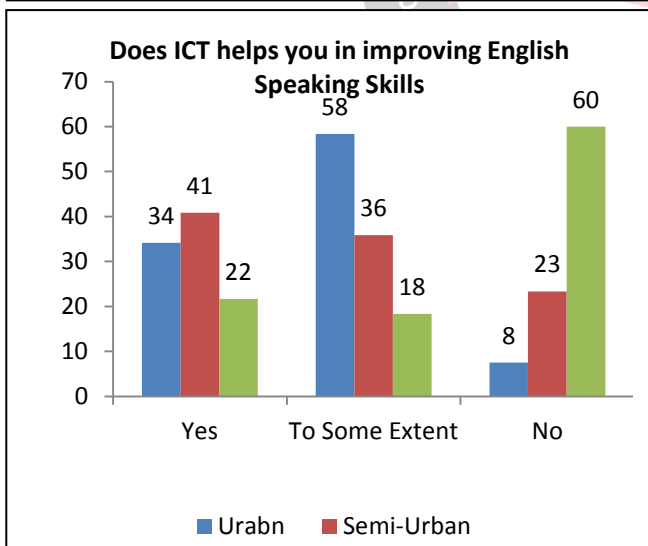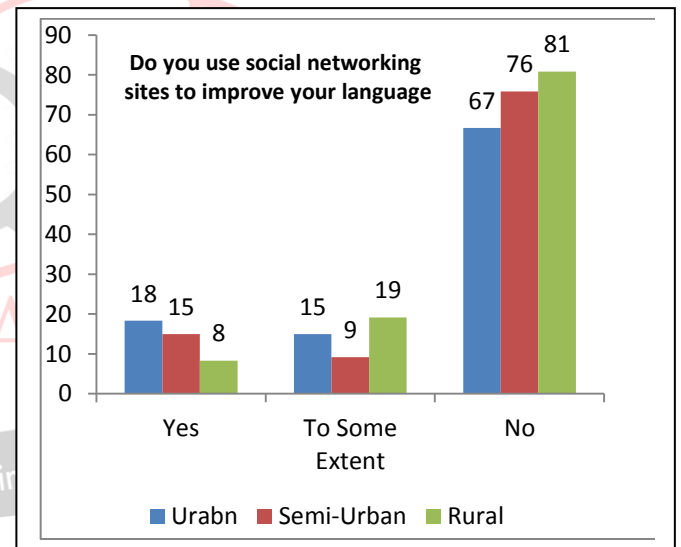Does ICT helps you in improving English Speaking Skills

Table 5.2 reveals that whether the ICT helps them to improve their speaking skills. The students in urban, semi-urban and rural have knowledge on ICT tools from table 5.1, but the graph reflects that the (60%) students of rural area have responded that they ICT does not help them in improving speaking skills whereas (58%) of the urban students say to some extent , it helps. Coming to the semi-urban, only (41%) of the students say yes.

Do you use online dictionaries for improving your language
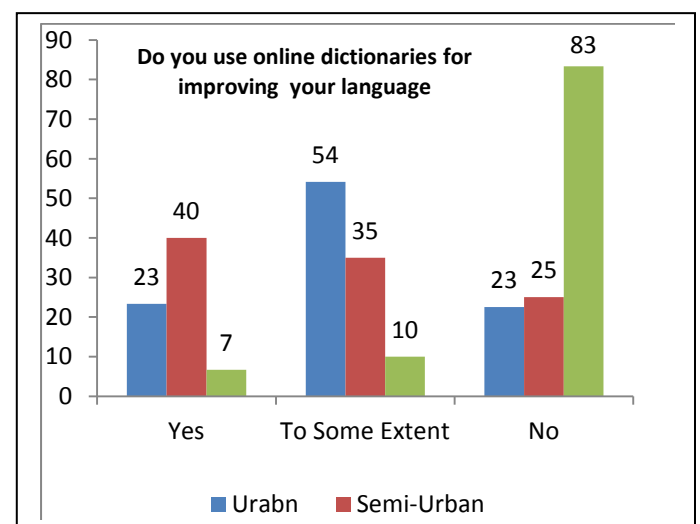
Only (23%) of the urban students say yes on using online dictionaries for improving their language and (54%) to some extent and (23%) say no. on the other hand, in semi-urban, only (40%) of the students say yes, (35%) to some extent and (25%) no and in rural area (83%) say no and (7%) say yes and remaining to some extent. It shows that the maximum of rural students do not make use of online dictionaries for improving their language. They are using ICT tools only for their entertainment and not for learning purpose in the right way.

The response of the students making use of social networking sites shows that (81%) of the rural students say no and (76%) of the semi-urban and (67%) of the urban had responded. In the same manner, (18%) of the urban, (15%) of the Semi-urban and (8%) of the rural are using social networking sites to improve their language. This response reflects that the students are not using social media for their learning purpose but for their personal use and for non-learning purposes.

The students have presented their answers with regard to their syllabus, if it so, (53%) of semi-urban students responded yes and (54%) of the rural students and (48%) of the urban students respectively. (25%) of the rural students say no and both in semi-urban and urban with the same percentage of (18%) respectively. From this, we can understand that , the curriculum is also one of the factors which affect in their learning process and it should be modified as per the needs of the learners.
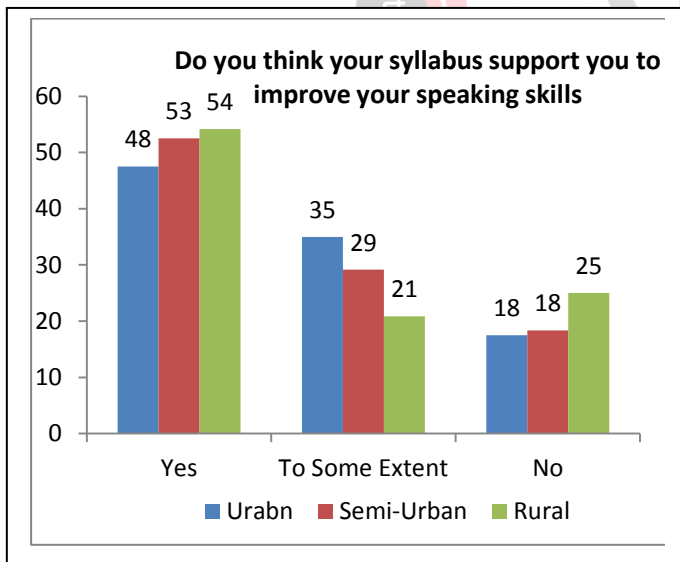

The survey consisted of the question enquiring the students about the use of ICT in a right manner. Table 5.3 shows that the foremost activities of the students involve were composing mails (96.6%), Chatting on Facebook (98.6%) , Reading news on the Internet (95.9%), Using chatrooms with strangers (88%), Downloading online music (92%) and watching youtube for entertainment (89%) respectively. More than two-thirds of the participants used the Google Map, playing games on smart phones, hacking of data and giving appointments for dating, and browsing websites for pleasure. The other had been 50% of choice on

writing blogs, using online websites for trading and business, getting online marriage. In contrast, the least frequent activities of ICT are retrieving data from irrelevant websites (30.2%) checking the weather forecast (29.7%), paying bills for account (26.5%), and making websites (11.3%)

Table 5.3 Level of ICT Competence

Item	Urban	Semi-Urban	Rural
Composing Mails	117	94	81
Chatting on Facebook	108	87	94
Reading news on Internet	72	45	32
Downloading Online Music	58	62	64
Watching Youtube for entertainment	67	57	68
Using Google Map	99	88	85
Playing games on Smart phones	65	97	99
Playing Computer games	72	88	108
Getting Online marriages	56	45	21
Paying bills	45	18	10
Writing blogs	10	3	0
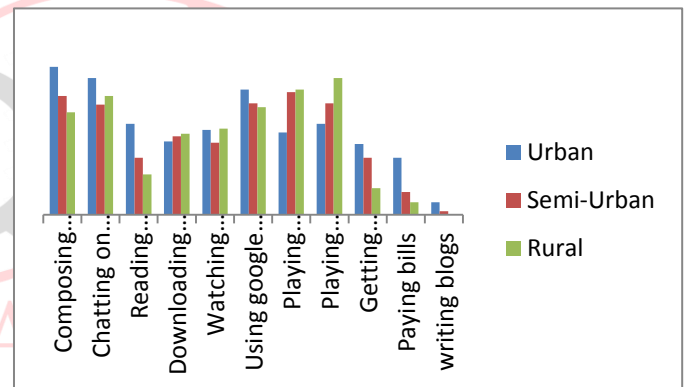
The above table 5.3 reveals the findings that in urban, most of the students know how to compose the mails and it shows that they have e-mail ids. In the similar way, in semi-urban and rural it reflects the same but the difference is very meager. In the case of chatting on face book, most of the urban students make use of it, simultaneously rural students make use of it. Most of the semi-urban students' i.e. 45 students only read news on Internet where as 32 students in rural read it but in Urban it is 72, which shows that urban students are reading news on internet i.e. more than 50% of the students. While coming to online music, 58 students of urban show less important for entertainment and in rural 64 students show interest in downloading online music. Similarly in watching youtube for entertainment, rural students and urban students stand the same. In using Google Map, 99 of urban students make use of it and it is 88 and 85 students in semi urban and rural. In the same manner, playing games on smart phones and computer games, the rural students stood first in the place and majority of them make use of it, but in urban it is 65

and 72 students only where the remaining may not use of it. The other aspect getting online marriages, the knowledge in the rural students is not more when compared to urban i.e. 56 students of urban are involved. In using paying bills and writing blogs the rural students are very worst where they do not make use of ICT in a proper way, but coming to writing blogs, there is no good number of students even in urban areas. It shows that the students make use of ICT only for entertainment and other purposes but not for learning purposes.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to focus more on this, the government had to take initiative steps and provide awareness and training programs for all the levels of students especially as the researcher belongs to the rural area, there is no much difference between the urban, semi-urban and rural areas. The focus should be done on the areas of Rayalaseema with proper training and guidance. There should be monitoring and evaluation committee and also the administrators has to provide the good infrastructure and also the facilities required to make of the government initiatives to provide the quality in the education system. As Engineers are the building blocks of the nation, they must have upgraded technology and learn with enthusiasm and interest.

Limitations of ICT use in Education: ICT simplifies and facilitates human beings in the modern era is not only advantageous but also has many limitations. It acts as "Panacea" to education and its improvements. The limitations can be categorized as teacher, students and technology related. All these potentiality limit the benefits of ICT to education. The following limitations of ICT use in education are:

1. ICT limits students' imagination.
2. It limits students' critical thinking and analytical skills.
3. The students' superficial understanding of the information.
4. Physical side-effects such as vision problem.
5. May visit unwanted sites.
6. Neglect natural way of learning.
7. Cannot regulate the plagiarism.
8. Neglect oral and writing skills.
9. Difficult for slow learners.
10. High cost of technology.
11. Maintenance of software and the computers.
12. Poor supply of electricity.

VII. CONCLUSION

Though there are Government ICT based initiatives and schemes to develop the Educational system in Andhra Pradesh like Swayam, Saransh, E-Patashala, Shala Darpan etc, the teacher community must have an awareness to make use of this ICT tools in the teaching –learning process. It is failed due to the lack of training for the teachers. So, the administrators and policy makers has to provide train the trainer programme and see that whether the teacher is implementing in his/her classroom. Otherwise, the purpose of giving training to the teacher-educators will be in vain. The government should necessary action with regard to this, if they fail to implement in their classroom teaching.

At present, the main concern is all about the use of technology to improve language teaching and learning. In fact there is no correlation between learning the language and using the language in a real situation in day to day life. Many reputed educational institutions argue that there is a huge gap between the technology knowledge and the skills most students learn in colleges and technology knowledge and the skills they need in the 21st century workplace.

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