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An Empirical Study of Challenges Faced by Nenasala Centers in Rurban Areas of Sri Lanka

By

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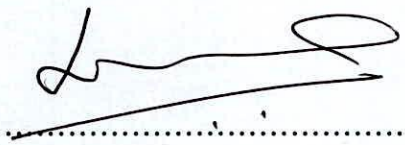
Thesis submitted to the University of Sri Jayewardenepura for the award of the Degree of Master of Science in Management

DECLARATION

The work described in this thesis was carried out by me under the supervision of Professor Kennedy D Gunawardana and a report on this has not been submitted in whole or in part to any university or any other institution for another Degree/Diploma.



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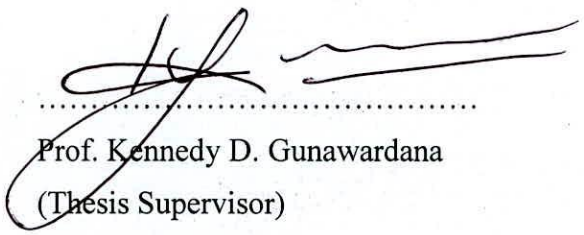
CERTIFICATION

I certify that the above statement made by the candidate is true and that thesis is suitable for submission to the University for the purpose of evaluation.



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K.L.S.L Abeywickrama

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ABSTRACT

The world is transforming from one state to another so quickly. Isolated rural areas in the world now being connected through Information communication technologies and this leads to the transformation of the agriculture based economies of the rural areas.

Rurbanization is a process of rural transformation. Even though the idea of rurban communities was first introduced in the beginning of 20yth century by Charles Josiah Galpin (1864-1947), it is not yet caught the much attention of the urban planners in developing countries. Rurbanization is a prominent development process commonly witnessed in developing countries. This transformation has rapidly increased after the 1980s.

There is a growing trend of forming rurban settlements in Sri Lanka due to the unavoidable process of rural transformation. This situation is common in Colombo, Gampaha and Kalutara districts. They have very limited access to information due to number of reasons. Information Communication Technology (ICT) can bring about important changes to the standards of living of the rurban population and needs to identify their information requirements. Information requirements of rurban population show different characteristics than those of rural and urban population.

This study was mainly conducted to identify the challenges and barriers in implementing telecentre concept in rurban areas. Also an attempt was made to identify the information and service requirements of the dwellers in rurban areas. A questionnaire was developed and data were collected from telecentre users and potential users in the Colombo and Gampaha districts. Findings suggested that commonly identified barriers for rural areas were not valid in the same level for the rurban areas. Three factors among the others were identified as barriers in effective implementation of barriers in rurban areas.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

In today's global economy, countries at all income levels face a growing imperative to leverage Information and communication Technologies (ICT) in support of their economic development and competitiveness. Developing as well as developed countries especially aspire to exploit the ICT to improve the dissemination of information among the citizens, to improve the productivity of the public services and finally to improve the standards of the living in the country.

ICT has now become the general purpose technology of our era, much like the technologies responsible for the industrial revolution. (Hanna 2007). ICTs play a critical part of all kinds of economic transactions, development processes and learning activities. Most of the governments adopt e-strategies in various aspects. These e-Strategies must be integrated across all the sectors. If deployed appropriately, ICTs can effect economic, social and political empowerment (Nikam et.al 2004).

Use of ICT to facilitate community improvement is a popular strategy or a tool used by the countries at all levels. How to energize and facilitate community improvement in third world counties through effective information dissemination has, more than ever before, attracted the attention of local and international bodies and institutions (Uhegbu 2001).