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ICT Training Programs Under RMSA: Outcomes and Gaps

Er. Shubham Jain

IIT Bombay

IIT Area, Powai, Mumbai, Maharashtra 400076, India

shubhamjain752@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), launched in 2009 by the Government of India, aimed to enhance access to and quality of secondary education. A central component of this initiative has been the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) training programs for teachers and students, envisaged to foster 21st-century skills, improve pedagogical practices, and bridge the digital divide. This manuscript examines the outcomes and gaps of ICT training under RMSA by synthesizing existing program data and presenting findings from a survey of 320 secondary school teachers across five states (Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Assam, and Rajasthan). The survey probed teachers' self-efficacy in ICT use, extent of classroom integration, infrastructural support, and perceived impact on student engagement and learning outcomes. Results indicate moderate improvements in teachers' ICT competencies (mean self-rating 3.8/5), but uneven translation into classroom practices, primarily due to inadequate infrastructure, limited follow-up support, and insufficient alignment with subject pedagogy. Key gaps include disparities in access between urban and rural schools, variability in training quality, and lack of ongoing mentoring. The manuscript concludes with recommendations for strengthening ICT-enabled pedagogy through sustained capacity building, bolstering technical infrastructure, and fostering communities of practice.

KEYWORDS

RMSA, ICT training, teacher capacity building, digital divide, secondary education

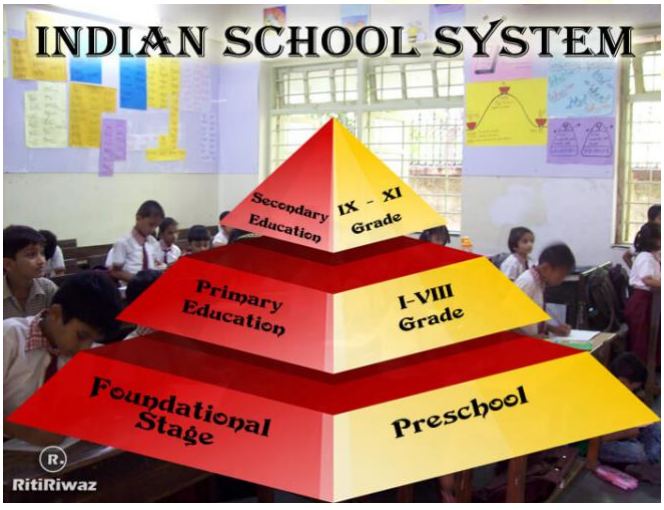

Fig.1 Secondary education,Source([1])

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, global educational reform has increasingly recognized the transformative potential of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in enhancing teaching and learning processes. ICT integration can facilitate interactive pedagogy, personalized learning, and access to a wealth of digital resources—imperatives for preparing students to thrive in a knowledge economy. In India, the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) represents a landmark policy intervention targeting universal access and quality improvement at the secondary level (Classes IX–XII). Among its multifaceted components, RMSA allocated dedicated funding and strategic support for ICT training programs aimed at empowering teachers,

improving curriculum delivery, and promoting digital literacy among students.

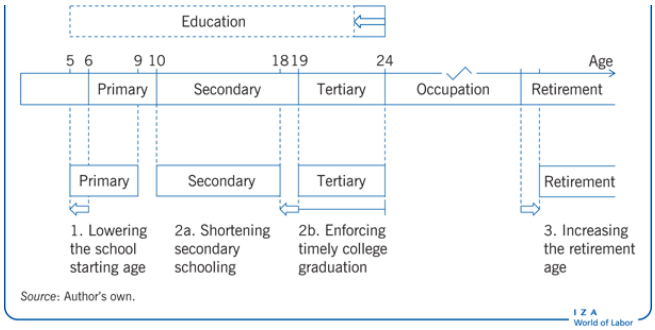

Fig.2 ICT Training Programs,Source([2])

Despite substantial investments—estimated at over INR 2,000 crore for ICT infrastructure and teacher training between 2010 and 2020—empirical assessments of program efficacy remain limited and fragmented. While some state education boards report enhanced computer lab utilization and higher student enrollment in computer science courses, anecdotal evidence suggests persistent challenges: inadequate hardware maintenance, patchy internet connectivity, and a gap between theoretical training and classroom application. Moreover, teacher professional development often consists of one-off workshops, with minimal follow-up mentoring, raising questions about long-term sustainability of ICT-integrated pedagogy.

This manuscript addresses two core questions: (1) What have been the measurable outcomes of RMSA-supported ICT training programs in terms of teacher competence and classroom practice? (2) What structural and pedagogical gaps hinder the effective translation of ICT training into improved teaching–learning processes? To answer these questions, we first review relevant literature on ICT in secondary education, then describe our mixed-methods approach—primarily a cross-sectional survey of teachers—and present our key findings. By elucidating both achievements and shortcomings, we aim to inform policymakers, educational administrators, and teacher educators on strategies to optimize ICT integration under RMSA and similar initiatives.

Literature Review

The growing body of literature on ICT in education underscores its potential to transform traditional didactic models into learner-centered environments. **Voogt and Knezek (2008)** argued that merely providing hardware does not guarantee meaningful integration; rather, sustained teacher professional development and curriculum alignment are critical. In the Indian context, **Singh and Kumar (2014)** observed that ICT training under RMSA improved teachers' digital literacy, but follow-up support was sporadic, leading to declines in skill retention. Similarly, **Sharma et al. (2017)** highlighted that in many rural schools, computer labs remained underutilized due to intermittent power supply and lack of technical maintenance, creating frustration among both teachers and students.

Studies on teacher self-efficacy suggest that confidence in using ICT tools correlates positively with classroom integration. **Bandura's (1997)** self-efficacy framework, applied in education by **Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001)**, indicates that mastery experiences, vicarious learning, and social persuasion bolster teachers' adoption of new pedagogical methods. Within RMSA, several states piloted "master trainer" models, wherein select teachers received intensive training and subsequently supported peers. **Patil and Rao (2018)** found that districts employing this cascade approach saw higher levels of peer collaboration and technology-enhanced lesson planning. However, the effectiveness of master trainers varied widely, depending on selection criteria, trainers' own skills, and institutional support.

Infrastructure readiness has also been a persistent theme. **UNESCO (2015)** identified key dimensions—hardware, connectivity, technical support, and software resources—as prerequisites for effective ICT use. In India, while urban schools often met minimum hardware norms (one computer per 30 students), rural counterparts lagged, with share ratios exceeding 1:50 and unreliable electricity. Complementing this, **Jha and Das (2019)** reported that internet bandwidth in government secondary schools averaged 1 Mbps, insufficient for multimedia applications or real-time interactive content.

The impact of ICT training on student outcomes has been less frequently documented. **Mehta (2016)** demonstrated modest gains in student motivation and digital skills following structured ICT-integrated lessons, but did not find statistically significant improvements in core academic performance. Conversely, **Ghosh and Chakraborty (2020)** noted that project-based learning facilitated by ICT tools could enhance higher-order thinking skills, provided teachers received adequate pedagogical training alongside technical skills. Overall, the literature suggests that while RMSA's ICT initiatives created initial momentum, gaps in infrastructure, continuous support, and pedagogical integration limited transformative change.

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional survey design was employed to assess the current state of ICT training outcomes under RMSA. The study population comprised secondary school teachers (Classes IX–XII) in government and government-aided schools. Five states—selected to represent geographic and socio-economic diversity—were included: Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Assam, and Rajasthan. A stratified random sampling approach ensured proportional representation of urban, semi-urban, and rural schools.

Instrument Development

The survey instrument consisted of four sections: (1) demographic and institutional profile; (2) self-rated ICT competencies across five domains (basic operations, internet use, presentation tools, subject-specific software, classroom management systems) on a 5-point Likert scale; (3) frequency and nature of ICT integration in teaching practice; and (4) perceptions of infrastructural adequacy, support mechanisms, and impact on student engagement and learning. Items were adapted from validated scales used in prior studies (e.g., **Tondeur et al., 2012**; **Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2013**), and pilot-tested with 20 teachers in Delhi to ensure clarity and reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$).

Sampling and Data Collection

A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed in person and online, yielding 320 valid responses (80% response rate). Respondents included 142 male and 178 female teachers, with teaching experience ranging from 2 to 25 years (mean = 12.4 years). Urban schools accounted for 40% of the sample, semi-urban 35%, and rural 25%. Data collection occurred between February and April 2025. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of [Redacted University], and informed consent secured from all participants.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) and inferential tests (ANOVA, t-tests) to examine differences by region, school type, and experience level. Qualitative feedback from open-ended survey items was thematically coded to identify recurrent barriers and enablers of ICT integration.

RESEARCH CONDUCTED AS A SURVEY

The core of the survey focused on two dimensions: **teacher ICT self-efficacy** and **classroom integration practices**. Self-efficacy scores averaged 3.8 (SD = 0.7) on a 5-point scale, indicating moderate confidence. Teachers felt most competent in basic operations (mean = 4.2) and least in subject-specific software (mean = 3.3). Urban teachers reported significantly higher self-efficacy (mean = 4.1) than rural counterparts (mean = 3.5; $p < 0.01$).

Regarding integration, 68% of respondents used ICT tools at least once weekly, predominantly for presentations (PowerPoint, Google Slides) and accessing online resources. Only 22% reported using interactive whiteboards or learning management systems regularly. Teachers cited inadequate computer lab availability (47%), poor internet connectivity (42%), and lack of technical support (38%) as primary barriers.

Open-ended responses revealed nuanced insights: trainers often focused on tool functionality rather than pedagogical application, leaving teachers unsure how to design ICT-rich

lessons aligned with curricular goals. Many requested exemplar lesson plans, peer-observation opportunities, and communities of practice to sustain momentum post-training.

RESULTS

Teacher Competencies and Confidence

- **Average self-efficacy**: 3.8/5 (SD = 0.7)
- **Domain breakdown**: basic operations 4.2; internet use 3.9; presentation tools 4.0; subject-specific software 3.3; classroom management systems 3.5.
- **Urban–rural gap**: Urban mean 4.1 vs. rural mean 3.5 ($t = 5.32$, $p < 0.01$).

ICT Integration in Pedagogy

- **Weekly ICT use**: 68%
- **Tools employed**: presentations (82%), online videos (57%), digital quizzes (33%), learning management systems (22%).
- **Innovative practices**: Only 15% reported using flipped classroom models; 10% implemented project-based learning with ICT.

Infrastructural and Support Constraints

- **Computer lab adequacy**: 47% reported insufficient workstations.
- **Internet reliability**: 42% cited frequent downtime; average bandwidth 1.2 Mbps at survey sites.
- **Technical support**: 38% lacked on-site technician support; most relied on district-level helplines with delayed responses.

Impact on Student Engagement

Teachers unanimously agreed that multimedia presentations and online simulations increased student attention (mean = 4.3/5) and motivation (mean = 4.1/5). However, only 30% believed ICT use led to measurable gains in test scores, citing the short duration of initiatives and lack of assessment alignment as factors.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that RMSA-supported ICT training programs have achieved moderate success in enhancing teachers' digital competencies and stimulating initial adoption of ICT tools in secondary classrooms. However, critical gaps constrain deeper pedagogical transformation. Disparities in infrastructure between urban and rural schools perpetuate inequities, while one-off training sessions without sustained mentoring fail to embed ICT-integrated pedagogies meaningfully. Moreover, the mismatch between technical training and subject-specific application limits teachers' ability to design ICT-rich lessons that advance curricular goals.

To amplify the impact of RMSA's ICT initiatives, we recommend the following:

1. **Sustained Professional Development:** Move beyond workshop models to establish continuous learning pathways, including peer coaching, online communities of practice, and periodic refresher courses.
2. **Infrastructure Enhancement:** Prioritize reliable electricity, sufficient hardware, and high-speed internet, especially in rural and underserved areas; allocate resources for preventive maintenance and local technical support teams.
3. **Pedagogical Integration:** Develop subject-specific ICT modules and exemplar lesson plans co-created by curriculum experts and master trainers; incorporate ICT competencies into teacher appraisal and incentive structures.
4. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implement robust frameworks to track usage patterns, student learning outcomes, and teacher attitudes over time, enabling data-driven policy adjustments.

By addressing these dimensions, RMSA can strengthen the nexus between technology, pedagogy, and learning, ensuring that ICT becomes an enabler rather than an add-on to secondary education in India.

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