

TOWARDS DIGITAL BANGLADESH: HEALTH SECTOR AS BRIDGING THE WIRED AND UNWIRED

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ABSTRACT

The hype of Information Communication Technology (ICT) spread all over the whole world during the second half of the last century. With the advent of globalization, developing countries were more impacted by this hyperventilation of ICT. Then it was realized that ICT could be used to achieve development and economic growth. For a developing country like Bangladesh, ICT4D was found to be full of potentials in bridging the rural community with urban community in terms of providing equal health services, gaining economic development. Being deeply influenced by this wave of ICT4D, the incumbent government pronounced 'Digital Bangladesh' vision by 2021. Using the concepts of 'top-down technocratic intervention' and 'bottom-up community activism' of Mazzarella (2010), this article aims at postulating health sector as leading the pioneer role on the way to 'Digital Bangladesh' bridging the wired and unwired community. The article also investigates how ICT4D has bridged the digital divide between the rural and urban areas.

Keywords: ICT4D, Digital Bangladesh, Digital Divide, Health Service, Rural & Urban Community, Empowerment.

1. Introduction

During the second half of the last century human being has encountered a series of economic and political dilemmas. Globalization, the strongest juxtaposition of trade and commerce, culture and mostly all kinds of social forces has posed cultural threats. The urge to use all kinds of resources as a response to these newly experienced social, political, cultural and economic dilemmas was strongly felt. As a consequence, human being embraced another wave of stimulation solely embedded by information technology. For example, Mazzarella (2010) argues, around 1999-2000, the shiny amalgam of ideas, projects and hyperventilation known as Information Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D) seemed to be taking over the world (p-783). Centre to this ICT4D hyperventilation was the information to be accessible. During the last century the human kind has turned to the ‘massive task of making our bewildering store of knowledge more accessible (Bush 1945). This accessible information has brought irrevocable social, productive, political and cultural transformations. But the transformations due to this ICT4D hyperventilation have been variegated from one country to another due to different socio-political factors. Mazzarella (2010) for example captures how India has been stimulated by this ICT4D hype. Similarly Bangladesh was also deeply moved and impacted by this wave of ICT as a mean of winning the heart of voters. For Bangladesh ICT4D was pronounced as ‘Digital Bangladesh’ by the Sheikh Hasina, the then leader of Bangladesh Awami League in the election manifesto, ‘Charter for Change’ for parliamentary election in 2008. She declared, ‘Our vision is to make Bangladesh digital by 2021’ (Bangladesh Enterprise Institute 2010, p-9). This pronouncement of ‘Digital Bangladesh’ ignited the candle of hope for prosperity and progress of the people of Bangladesh. Endless debates are available on the issue whether the government led by Bangladesh Awami League has been on the right track towards the vision of digital Bangladesh. Yet significant achievement on the way to the vision of Digital Bangladesh has been accomplished in different sectors. In this line argument, this article investigates how significant progress towards the vision of ‘Digital Bangladesh’ has been achieved in health sector and thereby argues, health sector has been playing the leading role on the way to ‘Digital Bangladesh’ bridging the wired community and unwired community in terms of providing health services. The article also investigates how ‘Digital Divide’ has been marginalized in providing this health services across the country.

2. Methodology

Conceptually the methodology of this study is based on Mazzarella’s concept of ‘top down technocratic development policy’ and ‘bottom up community activism’. Mazzarella (2010) argues, in order to measure real hyperventilation of ICT4D, both the top and bottom of the ‘Pyramid’ need to take into consideration (p-785). The use of metaphor ‘Pyramid’ by Mazzarella is very crucial, which in this context refers to health sector of Bangladesh. Therefore, ‘top down technocratic development policy’ refers to the policy level activities initiated in the health sector. In this case the study takes the initiatives into consideration taken by Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of the Government of People’s Republic of Bangladesh since DGHS is the supreme body to take initiatives in terms of giving primary health care and taking initiatives in terms of prevention, control, management and surveillance of diseases. As area of interventions this study takes the initiatives taken by NCD (Non-Communicable Disease) unit of DGHS. The justification of this purposive selection of NCD unit of DGHS, not taking other unit into consideration is based on high death toll and disease burden of non-communicable diseases. According to World Health Organization (WHO), 60% deaths and 46% diseases burden are globally caused by non-communicable diseases out of which 80% deaths and disease burden will occur in developing country like Bangladesh, a country burdened with both communicable diseases and non-communicable diseases. So in this study, to measure the interventions taken by the NCD unit of DGHS the dissemination channels of different interventions, the methods that have been used to undertake research conducted by NCD unit, the advocacy workshops have been critically studied and analyzed. In addition, other associated documents have been reviewed in order to postulate the argument presented in this article.

In order to measure the ICT4D hyperventilation at ‘bottom up community activism’ level, Mobile Alliance for Maternal Actions (MAMA Bangladesh), a country owned, country led initiative to ensure better maternal health, that is managed by a broad coalition of stakeholders and coordinated by D.Net has been analyzed. In addition, D. Net’s ‘Infolady’ model has also been used. Findings on these both models have been collected from D.Net’s presentation in the Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) workshop organized by Bangladesh Behaviour Change Communication Working Group (BDBCC) at Bangladesh Centre for Communication Program (BCCP) on November 22, 2011. Besides, Union Information and Service Centres (UISC) under ‘Access to Information (A2I) project has also been taken into consideration. Other associated literatures were also reviewed and taken into consideration.

3. Digital Bangladesh Vision: Charter for Change

Professor Ahsan (2009) argues, the forces of globalization and information technology are continuously reshaping our economy. In this context, he further argues, Sheikh Hasina declared the vision of Digital Bangladesh in ‘Charter for Change’, the election manifesto of Bangladesh Awami League. After the glorious victory in Parliamentary election in 2008, the concept of ‘Digital Bangladesh’ was also reiterated in government’s updated manifesto (July 2009), which briefly outlined that it will entail a digitalized government, ICT enabled services, nationwide internet connectivity, and high tech park for businesses and ICT-trained human resources (Igs, 2009).

Misunderstood and sometimes misinterpreted, the ‘Digital Bangladesh’, the Charter for Change is composed of four pillars: 1) Human Resource Development; 2) Connecting Citizens; 3) Digital Government and 4) Private Sector.

- 1) Human Resource Development: The ‘Digital Bangladesh’ vision aims to ‘make the best use of new technologies to build world class skills in all areas of study especially mathematics, science and English’ (A2I Programme 2009, p-6).
- 2) Connecting Citizens: This pillar of ‘Digital Bangladesh’ focuses on reducing the digital divide by strengthening ICT awareness and capacity of communities, ensuring innovative channels for citizens, and providing local language and locally relevant digital content. It also aims at establishing two way channels to promote participation of grassroots in policy intermediations.
- 3) Digital Government: Prof. Ahsan (2009) argues, ‘it is worth to mention that in the short run, ‘Digital Bangladesh’ aims at E-Governance and service delivery through ICT.’ Digital Bangladesh for pro-poor services aims to provide citizens with efficient and effective access to services at their doorstep. The first subcomponent of the pillar is e-services, which intend to ensure services ‘anytime’, ‘anywhere’ and to ‘anyone’ at an affordable price. The concept of ‘pro-poor’, i.e. affordable services is joined to the idea of ‘services at the doorstep’, i.e. easily accessible to the whole population. The second subcomponent under this is e-administration, involving strengthening the planning, implementation and monitoring process of the government including field administration through the use of decision support systems. These systems would entail the easy sharing of data and information across various agencies of the government and across geographic boundaries.
- 4) Private Sector: For ICT business, Digital Bangladesh deals with three broad issues namely access to market, business productivity, and developing ICT industry for local and export markets (Igs, 2009).

In addition to these four pillars, Digital Bangladesh also conceives other five ‘enablers’ that will take ‘Digital Bangladesh’ into national development agenda: (1) providing an appropriate institutional framework, (2) ensuring an adequate policy and legal framework, (3) developing infrastructure for banking and financial transactions, (4) providing appropriate delivery channels for taking services to citizens’

doorsteps and (5) identifying modalities where the private and public sector can work together to enrich government services (Igs, 2009, p-4). Institute of Governance Studies (Igs, 2009) further argues, ‘Digital Bangladesh’ is a long term-vision which views ICT as an enabler for socio-economic and human development by 2021.

Researchers are found divided on the point of how much of ‘ICT enabler’ should be deployed at initial stage to achieve socio-economic and human development. for example, Prof. Alam (2009) argues, the aim of ‘Digital Bangladesh’ in the first phase should be: (1) to ensure easier access to government forms and documents by citizens; (2) ensure submission of applications, forms and complains electronically; (3) ensure greater access to information by citizen charter and websites; (4) ensure university admission process to be digitalized except the admission test and (5) ensure greater connectivity by wireless internet.

4. Digital Bangladesh: Theoretical Foundations

Apart from the general modalities, the ‘Digital Bangladesh’ is embedded with deep grounded theoretical foundations. In other words, ‘Digital Bangladesh’ conceives a holistic approach to foster optimum socio-political economic development. According to the official website of Bangladesh Awami League, “Digital Bangladesh” does not only mean the broad use of computers, perhaps it means the modern philosophy of effective and useful use of technology in terms of implementing the promises in education, health, job placement, poverty reduction etc. Therefore, the government underscores a changing attitude, positive thinking and innovative ideas for the success of “Digital Bangladesh.” In strict sense of the term, the philosophy of “Digital Bangladesh” comprises ensuring people’s democracy and rights, transparency, accountability, establishing justice and ensuring delivery of government services in each door through maximum use of technology-with the ultimate goal to improve the daily lifestyle of general people, that includes all classes of people and does not discriminate people in terms of technology.

Again this E-Governance dominated ‘Digital Bangladesh’ leads to another dimension of theoretical foundations which could be found in A.R. Sethi’s statement. Sethi maintains,

Whereas in the West, information is treated as a commodity, to be bought and sold, subject to the rules of the market, in developing countries’ perception information needs to be harnessed for the complex task of nation building and socio-economic transformation, that is, essentially for development purposes. For us, information is a social resource, a social right and a social function. Access to information is the right of every human being [1994].

Sethi’s argument presupposes ‘information society’ where information is considered as a commodity for socio-economic transformation and development. Others take a different perspective of ‘information society.’ For example Merridy Wilson (2003) notes that although World Bank documents might distinguish the concept of a “knowledge society” from the more narrowly neoliberal-sounding “information economy,” policy recommendations still remained geared toward “growing the knowledge economy. Jan Nederveen Pieterse (2006) expresses the situation in terms only marginally updated from the political-economy critique that was forced out of mainstream policy debates in the 1980s: “ICT4D is a strategic part of ICT expansion: ICT4D is digital capitalism looking South - to growing middle classes, rising educational levels, vast cheap labour pools, and yet difficult regulatory environments” (Sreekumar and Rivera-S´anchez 2008:160).

Mazzarella (2010) argues, this ‘information economy’ or ‘knowledge economy’ incorporates a messianic aspect of ICT4D alongside its functional face (p-785). He further argues, ICT4D presented itself as doing away with the traditional opposition between top-down technocratic development policy and bottom-up

community activism (ibid, p-785). As a medium, the Internet appeared to combine universality with infinite particularity, broadcasting with interactivity. Perhaps most spectacularly, ICT4D was sold as reconciliation between neoliberal capitalism and the interests of the poorest people in the world—in ICT4D lingo, the “bottom of the pyramid”. To unearth this messianic aspect researchers have dug deeper in ICT4D. For example, C. K. Prahalad, BOP guru, spoke of a new “inclusive capitalism.” Bill Gates referred to “creative capitalism.” Any number of other variations followed in the desire to “marketize poverty” (see Schwittay 2008): “compassionate capitalism,” “virtuous capitalism,” “social capitalism,” “enlightened capitalism,” and “doing good while doing well.” In Prahalad and Stuart Hart’s words,

We believe that pursuing strategies for the bottom of the pyramid dissolves the conflict between proponents of free trade and capitalism on [the] one hand, and environmental and social sustainability on the other (2002).

5. Conceptualizing ‘Digital Bangladesh’: An Endless Debate

Despite the fact that the vision ‘Digital Bangladesh’ is very deep grounded theoretically, the population was found divided on issue of ‘Digital Bangladesh’. Similarly researchers were also found divided on ‘Digital Bangladesh’ vision. For example Delwar Hossain, a researcher of London School of Economics (LSE) argues, “Digital Bangladesh shares with all good political slogans a malleable, reverberative quality. The details of what it might entail have always been sketchy. Sheikh Hasina’s speeches during huge election rallies offered meager clues amid the jargon and sound bytes.” He continued “this may sound cynical. But, in a country where electricity is as intermittent as girls from poor homes being able to complete their full high-school education, the proclaimed Digital Bangladesh already had the whiff of a vote-catching election gimmick” (Genillo at el, p-4).

The conceptualization of mass people on a given policy or vision shows or indicates how holistically the vision has been embraced or accepted among the common people. Therefore, effort to assess the conceptualization of ‘Digital Bangladesh’ has been ventured by the Daily Star- Nielson Opinion Survey on the government’s 100 day of performance. In answer to the question ‘What do you understand by digital Bangladesh’, 2520 respondents aged from 18-86 were found to reply. The result published in the Daily Star shows, “52% respondents could not say anything about it. 23% respondents replied, they are not clear about it and 17% respondents think, it meant computerization of the society. Female and rural people are more confused about the idea than their urban counterparts.” Moreover, three percent of respondents associated the slogan as a “political word,” another three percent as “developed Bangladesh” and two percent as “modern Bangladesh” (The Daily Star, April 16, 2009).

Mostafa Jabbar, President of Bangladesh Computer Society argues in his book ‘Digital Bangladesh’,

As the citizen of Bangladesh had to fight against armed forces of Pakistan to achieve a free independent Bangladesh and as they have their rights to live free, independent, developed life. So, it is important to implement Digital Bangladesh program to fulfill the hope and desire of the nation by using digital technologies (2009).

Genillo at el argues, with the strong belief in and utter confusion over Digital Bangladesh, various sectors have developed their own interpretations about the buzzword digital Bangladesh (p-4). The Daily Star arranged a Focused Group Discussion (FGD) to assess the potentials of telephone industry in Bangladesh on September 09, 2010 with the participation of IT specialists and civil society of Bangladesh. The discussion found,

mobile industry in Bangladesh, which is still lagging at the bottom rung of tele-density in the region, is at the crossroads of growth where the huge untapped rural market beacons it. But the challenge is strong enough as the cost of owning a mobile set and connection is too prohibitive, making the vision of a Digital Bangladesh a pipe dream.

Think Tank Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) organized “Digital Bangladesh: From Vision to Reality” on June 15, 2009. BEI President Farooq Sobhan pointed out that for a developing country like Bangladesh, it would be a great challenge to give shape to the vision of Digital Bangladesh (Genillo at el, p-5).

Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus at the International Telecommunication Union World Information Award Ceremony, argues, that ICTs can in three major areas play an immediate role in helping the poor:

1) integrating the poor into the mainstream economy by expanding their market, eliminating the middlemen in their business and creating international job opportunities through service outsourcing; 2) bringing information, educational programmes, skills training and healthcare services, etc., all in a very user-friendly way, even to the most remote villages; and 3) empowering the poor, particularly poor women, with a stronger voice that can be heard beyond the borders of their village, better access to information, and improvement in the democratic process (Genillo at el, p-5).

At the core of Yonus’ argument is the transcendence of ICT4D which has made health sector of Bangladesh everywhere bridging the wired and unwired communities.

6. Health Sector in ‘Digital Bangladesh’: Bridging the wired and unwired

The hyperventilation of ICT4D has encompassed the far remote areas of Bangladesh bridging the top-down technocratic intervention and the bottom-up community intervention. Critical observations indicate that in both cases in Mazzarella’s term ‘top and bottom of the pyramid’ have been bridged through ICT4D hyperventilation.

6.1 NCD unit of Directorate General of Health Services: Top-down Technocratic Intervention

In order to fathom the ICT4D hyperventilation in non-communicable diseases (NCD unit) unit of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, the methodological approach applied by the NCD unit of DGHS has been analyzed. The methodological approach of NCD unit of DGHS includes all the phases or stages which are applied in order to devise or design a particular NCD interventions for NCD prevention, control, management and surveillances. As the supreme body of formulating NCD policies or strategies, NCD unit of DGHS undertakes extensive research before a particular intervention is disseminated. Therefore, activities of NCD unit of DGHS involve research activities and dissemination activities. So to assess the hyperventilation of ICT4D in the case of NCD unit, the research method and dissemination method or channel have been critically analyzed. For example NCD unit as policy level activities, has devised a number of strategies for specific non-communicable diseases. According to the official website of NCD unit of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), NCD unit has devised a number of NCD interventions or strategies such as Strategic Plan for Surveillance and Prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases in Bangladesh 2011-2015 which is based on Bangladesh NCD Risk Factor Survey 2010. Therefore, the research method of Bangladesh NCD Risk Factor Survey 2010 has been analyzed.

6.2 Bangladesh NCD Risk Factor Survey 2010

A risk factor approach for prevention of NCDs is feasible and cost effective. Besides, risk factor is also useful for the surveillance activities of non-communicable diseases. Therefore, NCD unit of Directorate General of Health Services conducted a National Risk Factor Survey in Bangladesh. According to the official website, the Risk Factor Survey was carried out from November 2009 to April 2009 by using WHO STEP wise surveillance (STEPS) approach with an objective of determining the prevalence of risk factors in aged 25 years or older.

According to Bangladesh NCD Risk Factor Survey 2010, centre to the methodological approach of this survey was the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT), which included data collection from the field to data analysis and interpretation in National Data Centre of WHO NCD office. In the survey iPAQ, a pocket pc and personal digital assistant unveiled by Compaq was used by field interviewer to collect data from the field. After the collection, data were sent to research physicians daily through internet. The senior research physicians, after getting data from the research physicians have checked data using other digital equipments. Therefore, from the field to national data centre, ICT has been used in every phase.

Using these digital technologies, according to the Bangladesh NCD Risk Factor Survey 2010, data were collected from 200 urban areas and 200 rural areas from 62 districts. Targeted households (11 200) were marked as either male (5 600) or female (5 600) households and one person aged 25 years or older per household was randomly selected. A total of 9 275 (4312 men and 4 963 women) non-institutionalized adults out of eligible 9 947 subjects from 10 991 households participated in the survey. The response rate was 93.2%. Based on this Risk Factor Survey, NCD unit of DGHS has disseminated Strategic Plan for Surveillance and Prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases in Bangladesh 2011-2015. According to the www.bdncdnet.com, Strategic Plan for Surveillance and Prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases in Bangladesh 2011-2015 was disseminated through website in a dissemination workshop at Ruposhi Bangla in 2011 with the presence of Honorable Secretary for Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Director of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) and other renowned experts working in the field of non-communicable diseases. Apart from these policy level activities, NCD unit of DGHS disseminates all kinds of information through website and quarterly e-Newsletter, Tale of Endurance. Thus, ICT4D hyperventilation has reached in every phase of NCD unit's top-down technocratic intervention.

6.3 Bottom up Community Intervention: Bridging the unwired community

Mozzarella's bottom up community interventions has also been deeply embedded with ICT4D hyperventilation bridging the rural unwired communities of Bangladesh through Mobile Alliance for Maternal Action (MAMA) Bangladesh and D.Net's 'infoladay' model. Besides, Union Information Service Centre (UISC) under the 'Access 2 Information (A2I)' project has also bridged the rural unwired communities.

6.3.1 Mobile Alliance for Maternal Action (MAMA) Bangladesh

Centre to the present development discourse of international donor agencies has been addressing health with the major focus on the unwired rural communities of the developing countries. The inner rationale of this trend of development strategies is to incorporate the health of unwired rural communities with the bridge of ICT.

If we are going to improve public health across the developing world, our solutions must be focused on reaching the hard to reach with health information they would otherwise not receive,” said USAID Administrator Raj Shah. “This partnership will harness the power of mobile technology to provide mothers with information about pregnancy, childbirth and the first year of life, empowering these women to make healthy decisions for themselves and their families (Press Release, May 03, 2011).

MAMA Bangladesh, a country owned and country led initiative is designed to provide health services using mobile technology to improve maternal and neonatal health indicators in rural areas of Bangladesh. The model, managed by broad coalition of stakeholders and coordinated by D.Net uses both audio and text health messages (known as aponjon) to pregnant women and new mothers linked to their delivery date and date of birth child. Currently operated as pilot project, MAMA Bangladesh aims to reach following objectives:

- Incorporate 500,000 pregnant women and new mothers with ‘Aponjon’ within three years
- Deliver critical life-saving health messages, leading to sustained improvements in health knowledge, behaviors and outcomes Build upon USAID and Government of Bangladesh maternal child health and family planning Programmes

According to the official website of D.Net, ‘Aponjon’ will inform women in the ways: 1) care for themselves during pregnancy; 2) dispel myths and misconceptions; 3) highlight warning signs; 4) connect women with local health services; 5) reinforce breast feeding practices; 6) explain the benefits of family planning; 7) make new mothers aware of how best to care for their babies; 8) give reminder for immunization; and 9) advise about nutrition of mother and child.

6.3.2 ‘Info Lady’: Bridging the Digital Divide

The term ‘Digital Divide’ is used to refer to the inequality to communicate digitally. However fast, it is not immediate and the related diffusion process follows the form of a well-known S-shaped curve, which distinguishes between early adopters and latecomers (Rogers, 2003). While this process unfolds, a new form of inequality is added to all the existing forms of discrimination: an inequality in the power to communicate and to process information digitally (Hilbert 2011, p-480). But the ‘Info Lady’ model is the sublime instance of hyperventilation of ICT4D that is bridging the ‘Digital Divide’ in the rural unwired areas in Bangladesh.

According to Intel Case Study (2009), Info Ladies are women who receive specialized training and technology, and then travel to remote areas to personally connect villagers to the information and resources they need (p-2). The ‘Info Lady’ model, a natural extension of mobile lady, an innovative initiative developed by D.Net, (Development Research Network) Bangladesh, a nonprofit research organization that champions the use of ICT for the economic development of Bangladesh has overcome problems like computer illiteracy and high implementation costs that are associated with providing computers directly to villagers. In a bag on the bicycles, the ‘Info Lady’ carrying an Intel-powered classmate PC, a mobile phone with Internet connectivity, a digital camera and a headphone set covers 15 villages to provide information services in terms of health, agriculture and communication at a lower cost. The services given by ‘Info Lady’ include livelihood information and knowledge, traditional commercial phone, international and local voice call through instant messenger, photography, internet based information and video and animation.

Intel Case Study (2009) captures the results which have been logical consequence of ‘Info Lady’ solution, that include:

- Remote villages like Shaghata (the area on which the case study is based) gain easier and less costly access to telecommunications and Internet services.
- Villagers improve access to health care and education, and increase opportunities to enhance their socioeconomic well-being.
- Local women earn a decent living while providing important resources and services to their communities.

Intel Case Study (2009) also documents people’s perception about ‘Info Lady’ which shows how ‘info Lady’ has bridged the unwired community and with the wired community reducing the digital divide.

“My cancer-stricken 60-year-old father wanted to see my sister who now lives in Canada. Thanks to the Info Lady, he could see and talk to her through a video chat. His joy was beyond description” Golam Mostofa Azad, Village Businessman, Intel Case Study (2009, p-1).

“My daughter and I were ill on two different occasions, and both times, the Info Lady connected us to the help desk in Dhaka, which recommended medicines that worked for us. This saved us time and money as the nearest doctor is located very far away” Lalmai Begum, Housewife, Intel Case Study (2009, p-2).

“One of my jackfruit trees was diseased and dying. The Info Lady helped me contact an expert at the help desk in Dhaka who recommended medicines for the tree. My tree is healing now. The service is worth the small price, as I would have lost income from the tree not bearing fruits ”Mohammed Joynal Abedin, Farmer, Intel Case Study (2009, p-3).

The Guardian also captures the bridge between the wired and unwired community facilitated by ‘Info Lady’ in Two Wheeled Triumph. “They also carry items like blood pressure monitors and pregnancy kits in their bags, and are able to send pictures of simple diseases and skin conditions to Dhaka for diagnosis. Because rural women suffer most from a lack of knowledge about medical, legal and social issues, a female information provider bridges the divide, making them more likely to be open” (The Guardian, November 23, 2009).

Apart from these non-government efforts for ICT4D hyperventilation, Union Information Service Centre (UISC) under the Access to Information (A2I) program has been initiated with aims to achieve two citizen centric pillars of Digital Bangladesh vision- 1) connecting citizens and 2) delivering services to the doorsteps of citizens (Igs, 2009, p-9).

7. Conclusion

Still the debate whether the ‘Digital Bangladesh’ vision has fulfilled its promises ensuring human development or reducing the inequality or not, goes on endlessly among the population. In some cases researchers are found divided or to have doubt about the potential promises of ‘Digital Bangladesh’. Arguments might have been put forward, the objectives of ‘Digital Bangladesh’ vision has never been achieved. It is no doubt, that the health sector has achieved significant achievement on the way to ‘Digital Bangladesh’ vision. Empirical evidence mentioned above shows, ICT4D has not only bridged the wired and non wired community, but also alleviated the inequality between the rural areas and urban areas empowering rural persons with endless potentials. The health sector has also played the leading role in paving the way for other sectors setting examples of harmonized bridge between the wired and unwired communities.

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