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RESEARCH EXPLORER-A Blind Review & Refereed Quarterly International Journal

ISSN: 2250-1940 (P) 2349-1647 (O)

Impact Factor: 3.655(CIF), 2.78(IRJIF), 2.77(NAAS)

Volume XIII, Issue 43

July- 2024

Formally UGC Approved Journal (63185), © Author

## APPLICATION OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY IN BUSINESS – A STUDY IN ERODE

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### *Abstract*

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*As technology continues to evolve, businesses that strategically harness the power of ICT are poised to thrive in the dynamic and competitive landscape of the modern business world. In essence, the integration of ICT in business is a double-edged sword, offering unprecedented opportunities for growth and efficiency while necessitating careful consideration of security implications. The importance of using Information Communication Technology (ICT) such as Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and electronic commerce (e-commerce) by business firms cannot be overstated. ICT supports online transactions, electronic payments and digital marketing, enabling businesses to reach a global audience and conduct transactions efficiently. The application of ICT in business contributes to improved communication, streamlined processes, increased productivity and better decision-making, ultimately enhancing overall business performance and competitiveness. The communication tools for their business, Microsoft Teams, Zoom and Slack. Internal Communication tools primarily used for business such as E-mail, Instant Messaging, In-person meetings and Video Conferencing.*

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**Keyword(s):** *ICT, ERP, e-commerce, Communication tools, video conferencing etc.,,*

### **Introduction**

Businesses use ICT for effective data storage, retrieval and analysis, helping in informed decision-making and improving overall operational efficiency. ICT facilitates efficient communication through emails, video conferencing and

messaging platforms, enhancing collaboration and reducing communication barriers. It facilitates efficient communication through emails, video conferencing and messaging platforms, enhancing collaboration and reducing communication barriers. Businesses utilize

ICT tools for managing customer interactions, analyzing customer data and enhancing overall customer satisfaction and loyalty. ICT enables businesses to automate repetitive tasks, streamline processes and increase productivity, leading to cost savings and improved accuracy. ICT helps in optimizing supply chain operations through real-time tracking, inventory management and coordination among various stakeholders. ICT supports HR functions, including recruitment, employee training, performance management, and payroll processing. It is crucial for implementing robust cyber security measures to protect sensitive business data and ensure the integrity of digital operations.

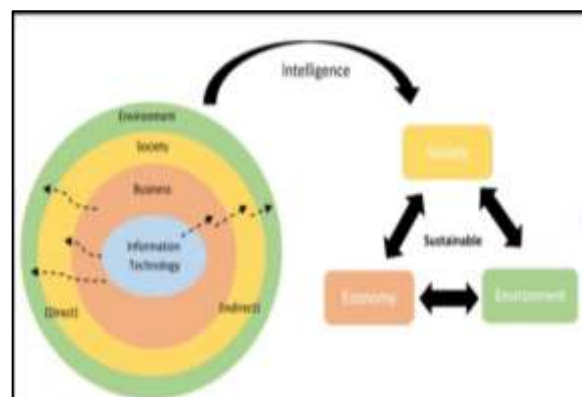
**Usefulness of ICT In Business**

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is highly useful in business for several reasons. ICT facilitates instant communication, allowing businesses to connect with clients, partners and employees globally, fostering collaboration and quick decision-making. ICT enables the automation of repetitive tasks, reducing manual errors, improving efficiency and freeing up time for employees to focus on more strategic aspects of their work. ICT systems help businesses organize, store, and analyze vast amounts of data, providing valuable insights for informed decision-making and strategic planning. Through the internet and digital platforms, businesses can expand their reach to a global audience, tapping into new markets and customer segments. Automation, streamlined processes, and digital communication

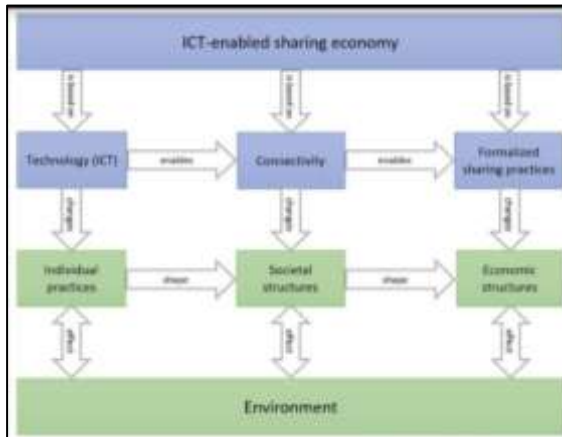
contribute to cost savings, making businesses more financially sustainable.

ICT tools, such as customer relationship management (CRM) systems, allow businesses to better understand and engage with their customers, enhancing overall customer satisfaction and loyalty. ICT supports businesses in gathering and analyzing market data, helping them stay informed about industry trends, competitor activities and customer preferences. ICT plays a crucial role in optimizing supply chain processes, ensuring timely and efficient delivery of products or services. ICT encourages innovation by providing platforms for research, development and implementation of new ideas. It also enhances business flexibility, allowing quick adaptation to changing market conditions. In essence, the usefulness of ICT in business lies in its ability to enhance communication, streamline operations, support data-driven decision-making and foster innovation, ultimately contributing to the overall success and competitiveness of the business.

**Diagram 1  
ICT in Business**



**Diagram 2**  
**ICT Enabled sharing Economy**



**Statement of the Problem**

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in business, while offering substantial benefits, presents a set of challenges that require careful consideration and strategic addressing. The rapid expansion of digital platforms and interconnectivity exposes businesses to an increased risk of cyber threats. Addressing vulnerabilities in cyber security is paramount to safeguard sensitive data, intellectual property, and maintain the trust of stakeholders. The advanced evolution of technology requires continuous up skilling of the workforce. Businesses face challenges in addressing skill gaps and providing adequate training to employees to leverage emerging technologies effectively. Disparities in access to ICT tools and resources may lead to a digital divide, limiting the participation of certain segments of the workforce or customer base. Ensuring equitable access to technology is essential for fostering inclusivity and preventing exclusion. Hence the researcher has made an attempt to find solutions to the above problem in the study.

**Scope of the Study**

Erode is a city located in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. It is the administrative headquarters of the Erode District. Erode is situated on the banks of the Bhavani River and is known for its agricultural and textile activities. The city is part of the Kongu Nadu region in western Tamil Nadu. Erode is renowned for its textile and garment industries, earning it the nickname "Textile City of India." The region is a major producer of handloom and powerloom textiles, contributing significantly to India's textile market. The surrounding areas of Erode are predominantly agricultural, with a focus on the cultivation of crops such as turmeric, coconut and banana. Agriculture plays a vital role in the local economy. Erode is a city that blends its traditional roots with modern economic activities, particularly in the textile industry. Its strategic location, coupled with a strong focus on agriculture and trade has contributed to its prominence in the region.

**Review of Literature**

Though many previous studies are conducted on application of ICT in various business related activities, there were only very few studies that are conducted in Erode District.

**Research Methodology**

Research Type	Analytical Research
Sampling Technique	Simple Random Sampling
Sample Size	50
Sample Unit	Erode
Source of Data collection	Primary Data
Tools for Data Collection	Questionnaire

**Findings of the Study**

- It is clear from the study that 68% of the respondents are male and the remaining 32% of the respondents are female.
- It is vivid that 31% of the respondents are between 41 to 50 years, 22% of them are between 51 to 60 years, 20% of them are above 61 years, 15% of them are between 31 to 40 years and remaining 12% of them are below 30 years.
- A majority of 70% of the respondents is married, 21% of them are unmarried, 6% are single and 3% are divorced.
- Thirty two percent of the respondents are using ICT in their business operation between 3 to 5 years, 28% are using it below 3 years, 21% are using it between 5 to 7 years and 19% of them are using it above 7 years.
- Microsoft Office Suite is the current ICT infrastructure for 53% of the respondents, Google Workspace is for 29% of the respondents and 18% of them use the combination of both.
- As the respondents have chosen more than one option the total responses were 184 and 38% of them use Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems as their current ICT tools or techniques for their business, 32% of them use Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software, 16% of them use Cloud computing services and 14% of them uses Data Analytics Tools.
- Among 150 respondents, 46% of them allocates more than 10% as their ICT Budget allocation, 31% of them

allocates between 5% to 10% and the rest 23% allocates less than 5% for their ICT budget allocation.

- As the respondents have chosen more than one option the total responses were 161. Microsoft Teams (48%) is mostly used as the communication tools for their business, Zoom (38%) and Slack (14%).
- From the analysis it is known that 39% of the respondents Proposed to use Artificial Intelligence to anticipate integrating into their business in the next few years, 27% of them IoT (Internet of Things), 14% Virtual Reality, 11% Augmented Reality and 9% Block Chain.

**Table 1**  
**Factors Contributing to ICT in Business**

Factors	S A	A	N	D A	SD A	To tal	Ra nk
Use of ICT influenced your business's environmental sustainability efforts	78	54	9	5	4	150	1
Score	390	216	27	10	40	647	
Adoption of ICT affected your business's ability to adapt to market changes and trends	58	42	25	15	10	150	5
Score	290	168	75	30	100	573	
Return On Investment (ROI) of ICT initiatives in your business	53	49	13	20	15	150	9

Score	265	196	399	400	15	555	
Extent of use of mobile applications benefited your business operations	63	44	17	22	4	150	3
Score	315	176	511	444	4	590	
Integration of e-commerce solutions	59	43	17	19	12	150	6
Score	295	172	511	388	12	568	
Use of ICT impacted communication and collaboration within your organization.	49	57	11	20	13	150	7
Score	245	228	333	400	13	559	
Implementation of cyber security measures to protect business data	23	76	15	22	14	150	12
Score	115	304	455	444	14	522	
Extent of use (awareness) cloud computing services for data storage and management	37	33	27	32	21	150	15
Score	185	132	811	644	21	483	
Handling data privacy	46	53	21	13	17	150	11

Source: Calculated Data

From the analysis it is found from the Table 4.36(a) that, the various factors that affects the use of ICT in business are ranked as given below. ICT influenced the business environmental sustainability

Score	230	212	63	26	17	548	
Adoption of ICT impacted efficiency in your business processes	27	39	40	17	27	150	16
Score	135	156	120	34	27	472	
Integration and Compatibility	36	50	17	29	18	150	13
Score	180	200	51	58	18	507	
Level of Satisfaction with the existing ICT infrastructure	50	64	16	11	9	150	4
Score	250	256	48	22	9	585	
Contribution of mobile app to business operations	36	49	24	13	28	150	14
Score	180	196	72	26	28	502	
Beneficial for remote collaboration	60	41	12	21	16	150	8
Score	300	164	36	42	16	558	
Employees resistance to technological changes	51	48	19	14	18	150	10
Score	255	192	57	28	18	550	
Overall satisfaction	64	50	10	16	10	150	2
Score	320	200	30	32	10	592	

efforts which are ranked as one by the respondents; Overall satisfaction with second rank, mobile apps benefits the business operation with third rank and so on. The factors that occupy least rank are

the efficiency of the business increases and the lack of awareness of cloud system in business ICT usage.

### **Conclusion**

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become a cornerstone in modern business operations, profoundly influencing various facets of organizational dynamics. The widespread adoption of ICT brings about transformative changes, shaping the way businesses communicate, operate, and strategize. ICT significantly enhances operational efficiency through task automation, streamlined processes and improved workflow management, contributing to increased productivity and cost-effectiveness. Businesses leverage ICT to transcend geographical boundaries, tapping into global markets through e-commerce, online platforms and digital marketing, thereby expanding their reach and opportunities.

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