ABSTRACT

The government of Rwanda aims to transform the country from largely agricultural based economy to knowledge and information economy in an effort to reach middle income status by 2020. Investment in information and communications technology (ICT) is seen as a key to this transition and as an important vehicle for improving the delivery of and access to public and private services, particularly in rural areas. Through its application, ICTs is a factor of development and poverty reduction by improving access to education, health, public and private financial services, etc. ICTs also help small farmers and artisans by connecting them to markets. The study was conducted in Gakenke district, Janja sector, one of the rural areas in Rwanda to investigate how ICTs application in the area of formal and non formal education is helping people in rural areas in the fight against poverty and quest for development. In the process, the study gleans into the contribution of ICTs and eradication in achieving MDGs. It’s based on simple model linking the ICT sector to education, socio-economic growth (development) and poverty reduction. In analyzing the data, the study explores the potential contribution of ICT to education and knowledge, which are key drivers of development in Rwanda. the study ends by exploring what additional measures need to be taken to promote ICT diffusion and democratization of access to ICT services. The study makes a number of recommendations including that ICT dimension be built in sector policies and implementation strategies for the education sector and that it is of critical importance to supply electricity in the rural areas as in urban areas to reduce the big rural-urban gap in ICT penetration due to lack of electricity in rural areas.