

Chapter 4

Examining the Policy and Regulatory Frameworks for Enhancing B5G and 6G Connectivity in Rural Areas

Ravindran Kandasamy

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6763-0216>

Presidency College, India

T. Dakshinamurthy

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-8937-6295>

Xavier Institute of Management, India

R. Ramesh

*Department of Management Studies, Knowledge
Institute of Technology, Salem, India*

Revathi Perumal

Knowledge Institute of Technology, India

T. N. Seenivasan.

Gnanamani College of Technology, India

Raghu Narayana Reddy

Presidency College, India

Hendra Hendra

Wilmar Bisnis Indonesia Polytechnic, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the role of legislative and regulatory frameworks in enhancing B5G and 6G connectivity in rural areas. It highlights challenges like inadequate infrastructure and high costs that hinder services and growth. B5G and 6G promise transformative benefits with high speeds and innovative applications. The chapter advocates for robust policies on spectrum allocation, infrastructure incentives, and Universal Service Obligations (USOs) while addressing the impact of emerging technologies and trends in cybersecurity and sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Beyond 5G, or B5G, is the term for the technological developments and breakthroughs that will expand on the current 5G networks and create the foundation for upcoming communication systems. It includes advanced apps that surpass 5G's capabilities, better network architecture, higher data throughput, and

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improved connectivity. The goal of B5G is to improve upon the shortcomings of 5G by offering more dependable, adaptable, and efficient communication solutions (Xia et al., 2021).

Sixth Generation, or 6G, is the upcoming generation of mobile networks that is anticipated to replace Fifth Generation. In comparison to 5G, it claims to provide even greater data throughput, extremely low latency, and enhanced reliability. Utilizing terahertz (THz) frequencies, integrating artificial intelligence (AI) for network management, and delivering cutting-edge apps like immersive AR and VR are some of the salient features of 6G. More new services and technologies are expected to be supported by 6G, which could completely change a number of industries (Rappaport et al., 2021).

Potential Impact on Rural Areas

B5G and Rural Areas: By enhancing network performance and connectivity, B5G technologies could have a big influence on rural areas. Better access to medical, educational materials, and online services may be made possible by increased data rates and decreased latency. This could improve the quality of life and promote economic growth in less connected places by bridging the digital divide between urban and rural areas (Xia et al., 2021).

6G and Rural Areas: By providing even more dependable and strong network connections, the introduction of 6G technology is anticipated to substantially benefit rural areas. 6G's high-speed data capabilities and cutting-edge apps might improve telecommuting, facilitate remote learning and healthcare, and spur local enterprises' creativity. AI and THz frequency integration may make it possible to create new infrastructure and communication models that are specifically designed for rural areas, which might change how these communities use technology (Rappaport et al., 2021).

DIGITAL DIVIDE

The difference between people and communities who have access to contemporary information and communication technologies (ICTs) and those who do not is known as the “digital divide.” This gap can take many different forms, such as disparities in digital literacy, internet access, and resource availability. Inequalities in opportunities and outcomes result from the gap, which frequently connects with socioeconomic characteristics, geographic regions, and educational levels.

Importance of Bridging the Digital Divide

Economic Impact: Growth and development of the economy depend on bridging the digital divide. Having access to technology increases work options, encourages entrepreneurship, and allows people to engage in the digital economy. While areas with restricted access may suffer with slower economic growth and greater poverty, regions with high levels of digital access enjoy more strong economic development (Beard et al., 2016).

Educational Opportunities: The growth of education depends on equitable access to technology. Pupils who have access to dependable internet and digital resources are better equipped to achieve academic success and develop skills that are necessary for today's workforce. By addressing the digital gap, we can make sure that all students have access to high-quality instruction and learning resources, irrespective of their location or socioeconomic status (Van Dijk, 2020).

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