

# RITCHIE STREETS

ENABLER OF DIGITAL REVOLUTION IN  
INDIA

**DID RITCHIE STREET BUILT THE SOCIETY  
AROUND IT; OR DID THE SOCIETY BUILT  
RITCHIE STREET?**

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# STORY OF RITCHIE STREET'S DEVELOPMENT FROM A RADIO STREET TO AN E-STREET

- Before the onset of Doordarshan in 1982, radio was the only channel of entertainment at home. It was a luxury unaffordable to sizable sections of humanity. Ritchie street then rose to the needs of the hour by providing radios at affordable prices.
- The electronic market expanded in the late 80s and 90s, with tape recorders and computers being available.
- Now there are about 2000 registered shops with several unregistered ones. Most of them sell: cell phones, computers, CCTV, laptops, cameras, watches etc; employing more than 10,000 people.

# THE FIRST ELECTRONIC SHOP:

- Vimal Mishra says that the first electronic shop opened in 1970 dealing in electronic components and spares.
- In the year following that 25 shops had opened.
- Between 1982 to 1990, 125 more shops had come up.

## CONTINUED..

- Initially Ritchie street housed very few shops selling radios, transistors, resistors, capacitors etc.
- In those days most of these goods were smuggled.
- The market bloomed around 70s and 80s. There were a few shops selling vinyl records of movies then.
- At the end of the 80s and 90s, the street expanded its area spatially and technologically. Cassettes, tape recorders and computer systems then became available.

## CONTINUED..

- In the 2000s came the mobile phones. Today we see mostly mobile shops selling smart phones and accessories.
- Some shops are wholesale.
- Some also offer repair services.
- Ethical shopkeepers vs 2<sup>nd</sup> hand products.



# RITCHIE STREET THE ENABLER OF INDIA'S DIGITALISATION JOURNEY

- Facilitated greater use of software and hardware through affordable pricing; and lasting repair services.
- The second-hand smartphone market is triggering several far-reaching benefits. Its ability to harmonise demand and supply for smartphones is accelerating its adoption; which is a vital enabler of India's digitalisation journey.
- Thereby leading to the greater use of internet by the students and youth.
- Development of e-commerce.

## CONTINUED..

- Greater competition in the market as students could compare the features of the products and prices and make intelligent choices; along with gifts; saving upon time, fuel price; with warranty from the companies.
- This led to changes in the buying habits of the customers.
- Compelled the technocrats to come up with novel and advanced interventions to ensure the sustainability of their products in the market.
- This created many paradigm shifts in the hardware and software industries.



# SECOND-HAND DEVICES : THE ELIXIR OF THE POOR

- Second hand devices have helped people migrate from feature phones to smart phones.
- Indian Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA).
- 25 million.
- \$4.6 billion by 2025.
- 1 in 3, first time smartphone buyer.

# WHERE ARE DEVICES STOLEN FROM: THE ROLE OF FENCE



# RITCHIE STREET: A MACROCOSMIC VIEW

- Increase in standards of living.
- Provides employment.
- Decreases the distribution cost; and thereby the cost of the goods.
- Consumer awareness.
- Managing consumer expectations.
- Increases national income.

## CONTINUED..

- Rise in land prices.
- Schools and establishments.
- Infrastructure.
- CCTV.
- Flats of slum clearance boards.
- Ritchie streets can be found in all port cities of India either as a shop, street or an individual who sells this goods.

# THE MASTER STROKE

- The societal impact of Ritchie street can be measured by the satisfaction and trust of its customers.



# CYBER CAFES: THE GATEWAYS TO WWW DISAPPEARING IN TODAY'S SMART PHONE ERA

- Cyber cafes symbolised India's nascent internet revolution and introduced generations to the WWW.
- The real internet revolution in India was made possible by the pocket- friendly mobiles supplied in places like Ritchie street.
- WWW has now penetrated even into households in remote villages.
- The cyber cafe owners now offer online utility services – air and rail ticketing, money transfers, online applications, scanning and printing – to earn a living.
- The same story is true to public telephone booths as well.



# RITCHIE STREET VS MOORE MARKET: THE QUINTESSENCE OF SURVIVAL

- Moore market, the once flourishing second-hand book market has almost faded into the annals of history.
- Merchants of the Moore market did not make their products available online.
- Couldn't catch up with the pricing and conveniences offered by e-books.
- Moore market failed to change its tunes to suit the needs of the contemporary society; and hence was tuned out by the society.
- Ritchie street is update, ever sensitive to the advanced applications and online technologies.
- Adopts to all the technological advancements and matches its pace to the changing times.
- Every online and offline need of the customer is satisfied by a good number of shops in the Ritchie street.

# CONCLUSION

- It is improper to argue that Ritchie street brought in all the revolutions in the fields of internet, laptops and smartphones.
- But it was Ritchie streets that made these products useable even in poor households.
- The increase in the availability of affordable smart phones brought in internet into many households.
- This expedited and popularised e-commerce; which sold products at competent prices with discounts, offers, warranties etc.
- This compelled manufacturers to add new features into their products to ensure their survival in the market.
- Thus, it can be argued that Ritchie street had a major role in all the paradigm shifts in the fields of computers, PCs and smartphones.

# RITCHIE STREET THE GODMOTHER OF INVENTIONS

- Ritchie street ensured a new era of growth in the PC market.
- Thus, technological advancements were propelled by the Ritchie street.
- It was Ritchie street that gave wings to the technological innovations and made it a household brand; by providing the commodities at affordable prices.
- If necessity is the mother of inventions; Ritchie street is the godmother who propels and necessitates those inventions.

# LOOKING IN HINDSIGHT

- In hindsight Jaffer is right

But for regular use:

The first wheel made by the Mesopotamians would have perished in the place of its origin; instead of giving way to the countless innovations to this product.

And the fire produced by the middle stone age man would have got extinguished in that age itself instead of giving way to steam energy, thermal energy etc.

EVERY PRODUCT SHINES AND EVOLVES THROUGH USE. TO REST IS TO RUST.