The Pitfalls and Remedial Actions to be needed in the Context of "Digital India"

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Abstract:
'Digital India' – is a concept, and will be going to realised by focusing on rural India. Many initiatives have been implementing since last two decades to gather the information about hurdles and opportunities to convert India as digital India as to run with the pace of global development. In this paper the general pitfalls and remedial actions are discussed so as to make transparent and reliable society to improve the living standards of each standard people. The results have shown that a triangular basis responsibility is on the shoulders of government, implementing intermediate agencies and end users. The remedial actions have to be taken from root-cause level so that strategies to be implemented in a foreseeing basis manner to make India as 'Digital India'.

Keywords: Digital India, Rural India, Computer Literacy, End users.

I. INTRODUCTION

India has over 0.65 million villages and 0.25 million panchayats. People below poverty line are approx 40% and more than 25-30% of people are still illiterate. Digital literacy is almost no-existent among more than 90% of India's population.[1] Now the country has reached the 2nd position in largest mobile market. But when comes to internet connectivity point of view, India is lagging behind. Connecting the different geographical areas and their people is mandatory for social growth in recent days.

According to Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) report, now 251 million internet users are there in rural India. This number was at 30 million in the year of 2011.

There is an increase of internet utility growth from 4.26% to 23.08% in rural India. But this growth rate is not enough to turn the country as per the digital India concept.

Objective of the study

To study the opportunities and challenges of 'digital India' concept from rural context.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Aishwarya Bedekar, Peter Busch and Deborah Richards in their analysis about bringing the awareness about the IT initiatives in rural India states that, in case of creating the awareness about the latest facilities available for infants and women from health prospects point of view, the facilities closure to patients and creating access to early medical treatments are important initially. Then allowing facilities to e-learning from anywhere and anytime and increasing employment facilities in rural areas also enables digital literacy improvement in rural India.[2]

Dr. Amrit Patel in his research found the urgency of adoptability of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to enable women, small and marginal farmers in the light of initiatives already adopted by the government and

NABARD. He also suggested the farmer-friendly portals as a part of digital India revolution to improve agricultural productivity and profitability.[3]

Dr. Priyadarshini padhi has narrated 'digital India' as the transformation of India into a country of absorption of digital technology from root level of rural areas. 'Digital India' is a concept and will be realized by so many innovative and revolutionary aspects. The participative, transparent and responsive society is required to make digitized country. They also highlighted the issues in transforming India into digital country. They are illiteracy rate, poor coordination between various departments, poor internet speed and poor infrastructure.[4]

Kamarulzaman Kamaruddin has stated that, in order to improve computer literacy in rural areas, government has to computer selling schemes with easy EMI's, so that every household needs to show initially interest to purchase them. The curriculum has to be designed in such a way that every student should be well versed with the computer literacy. The computer education programs are to be divided into two ways – one is general literacy programs and two is situational utility based learning programs.[5]

P Lavanya Kumari, G Anupama and K Giridhar Reddy have tried to elevate the opportunities and challenges in front of the farmers in the context of digital India. The major hurdle in making the digital economy is poor education. The changing market information, lack of initiations and negligence are the other drawbacks in transforming whole nation into digital country.[6]

Mrinalini Kaul and Purvi Mathur, in their research has given some recommendations to turn into digitalized India. They are primarily – whatever the initiative taken by the governments can only be successful, if people sincerely involve in transformation, education to everybody is mandatory to understand the utility and scope of the initiatives, community centres can be formed all-round the nation to enable the people to understand the usage and advantages of digitization.[7]

Seema Dua, from her research suggested the addressing digital divide initially. There is an urgency of creating the massive awareness into the public minds about utility and advantages of digital knowledge. The private sector must be given high priority in terms of tax holidays and other benefits when they are striving to strengthen the digital knowledge in remote areas.[8]

Smitha HS in her article about woman empowerment through digital literacy strategies has stated that digital literacy is essential to women to fit their access to changing education system, employment and to get right access to resource utilization. Further it will empower the women with perfect decision ability, give them power to fight against social discriminations.[9]

T David Johnson has stated that continuous learning environment is needed in the clusters of villages around the country to justify the digital village concept. In this context the major role is to be played by local private organisations. The local people are to be appointed, who are digitally sound between the clusters. The old and kept aside computers at government and semi government organisations are to be used for teaching the basic computer education to the rural people. The major drawback of failure of the concept is lack of enough knowledge, no curiosity about learning new things, no interest about learning at governmental allocated employees.[10]

Yashwant Singh Sipre and Dr. Mamta Malik in their article has highlighted the reasons for poor digital literacy rate in India. They are slow growth in literacy rate, system of education and usages of hundreds of languages. They also underlined the projects like GYANDOOT which connects the rural cyber cafes which caters the routine needs of the masses.[11]

III. ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

Table 1 Mobile Internet Users in India (Urban vs Rural)
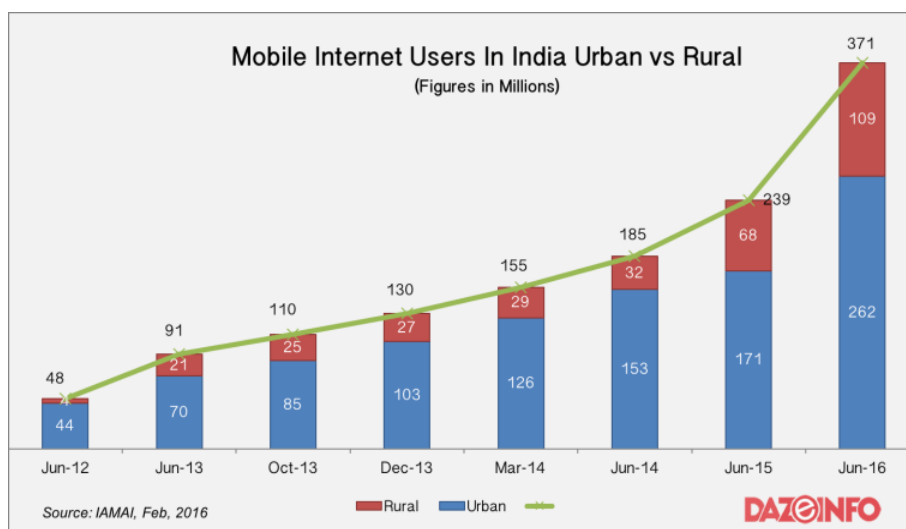
From the above bar chart of mobile internet users in India with urban vs rural context, it is clear that in June, 2012 there were total of 48 million mobile internet users were observed, in which 4 million people belongs to rural areas and rest of 48 million, i.e., 44 million people belongs to urban areas. In a time period of 4 years, i.e., from June, 2012 to June, 2016 an expansion could be observed from 44 million to 262 million mobile internet users with approximately 70.6% growth in case of urban usage people out of total mobile internet people. Whereas in case of rural usage people, expansion can be found from 4 million to 109 million people with 29.4% growth. This analysis put forth importance of building the awareness along with the utility benefits especially to the rural people, so that a complete 'digital India' concept can be realised.

Table 2. Availing Banking Services
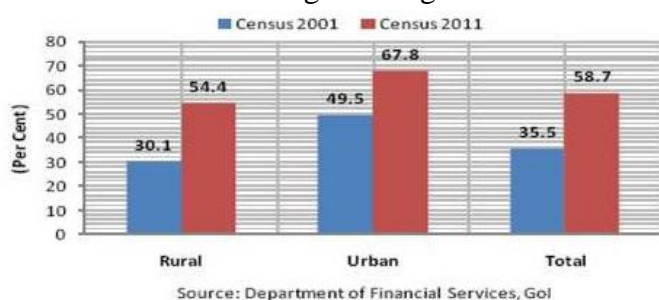
From the above bar chart, it is clear that, the percentage of people, who were availing banking

services, was at 30.1% in the year 2001 and reached to 54.4% in the year 2011. The above percentages indicating that, it has to do a lot to shift the people from the physical transactions to banking transactions through internet. From the total figures, it is vivid that even by including urban banking service availing people, there was not much growth happened

Table 3 Number of Population per 1000 who can operate computer (age >14 years)

gender	rural				urban				rural + urban			
					age group (years)							
	14-29	30-45	46-60	60 and above	14-29	30-45	46-60	60 and above	14-29	30-45	46-60	60 and above
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
male	227	64	22	6	536	309	209	106	323	143	82	38
female	135	19	5	1	438	173	87	28	229	67	31	229
person	183	41	14	3	489	243	148	68	278	105	56	24

Source: quora.com

From the above Table 3, it is clear that the people count in computer operating prospects especially in rural areas is very less as compared with urban areas. From the age centrifugation point of view, the people between the age group of 14 – 29 years were showing much interest to learn computer literacy than the other groups. The government has to take initiatives to create consciousness about the importance of digital literacy in middle and above middle age groups to avail all benefits from society and securing their interest of living

Table 4 Tier-Wise penetration of ATM networks in India (2017)
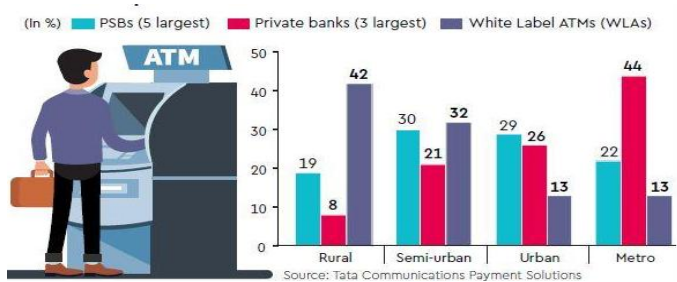
Even though still the maximum population of India is concentrated in rural areas, the above diagram depicts that, in rural areas out of 100 Public Sector Bank ATM's, only 19 were established in rural areas. The Private Bank ATM's were established in rural areas with very less count, i.e., 8 ATM's out of 100 ATM's. The reason behind this less establishment in rural areas is people's lack of interest in carrying transactions through ATM's.

IV. RESULTS AND REMEDIAL ACTIONS

- Digital literacy in India is a continuous program. It requires more fund allocations to implement various strategies systematically to achieve the targets of the vision.
- Till now only 21.3% of rural students have access to computers to learn the basics and the activities those carried digitally. So it is the primary responsibility of the government

to form village clusters and start the computer libraries between them so as to create awareness and access to the village people consistently.

- Programs need to be designed and implemented as per the rural cultures and standards of learning ability only.
- Education should be changed from the primary level back grounded by computer education.
- Off time literacy programs should be included for the purpose of working rural people, women and elders.
- Even if government has started any number of the initiative programs, without the cooperation of the end users, the targets might not be achieved. So awareness creation even incentives provision should be announced to the regular learners.
- Results should be evaluated continuously and programs should be designed flexibly as per the requirements.
- Mainly rural women should be focussed, so that they can educate their households about the importance of digital literacy.
- Digitization should be bring not only limited to the monetary transactions but also spread up to their agricultural practices.

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