

DIGITIZATION AND POSSIBILITIES FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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India will be benefited by applying digitization across all levels of development and healthcare sector. In a massively populated country like India, digitization will provide better education and healthcare access to human resources. Digitization potentially will enable the education and healthcare industry to manage its huge volumes of data. Digitization is a way to improve the performance of rural education and healthcare systems by linking various systems via data and communications platform.

The third budget of the present government has presented by Finance Minister on 1 February, against the backdrop of global uncertainty with major economic and political developments, The Budget is focused on India's long-term growth and development and reflects the government's approach towards solving systemic inefficiencies while also keeping in view the need for economic reforms, increased investments and holistic growth. The Budget theme to Transform, Energise and Clean India (TEC) aims to address issues with several core areas such as rural growth, poverty alleviation, infrastructure development and corruption while showing the government's commitment towards prudent fiscal management and tax administration. The tax reforms announced were primarily aimed at stimulating growth and promoting digitisation and transparency. Besides reforms to the tax rate, numerous measures were announced to combat issues caused by the dependence on cash and black money, with cleaning up political funding being the primary component. Overall, the Budget looks positive with respect to the government balancing fiscal discipline, infrastructural development and rural upliftment along with setting India on the path towards holistic growth.

BharatNet & DigiGaon as Ambitious Projects:

Finance Minister highlighted the importance of India's Telecom sector in Budget 2017-18 and announced that the allocation of the aspirational BharatNet project has been stepped up to Rs. 10,000

crores. He has encouraged a shift to digital platforms with incentives to payers as well as merchants driving convenience, efficiency and transparency.

Additionally, a DigiGaon initiative will be launched which aims at provision of telemedicine, education and skills using of digital technology. The Finance Minister added that the recent spectrum auctions have lowered the spectrum scarcity in the country. As part of the Digital Literacy campaign, the proposed DigiGaon initiative wherein telemedicine, education and skills will be delivered through the digital platform in rural areas, will improve access to the skill programme and enhance Employment options. The increased allocation for Bharatnet from Rs.6000 crore in FY 2016-17 to Rs.10000 crore in FY 2017-18 will improve the broadband connectivity in rural India through Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) and also facilitate more jobs and thereby, improving health in rural areas.





Meanwhile, the government's agenda for this year will be to transform, energise and clean India (TEC India) and that digital economy will play a huge part in its implementation and achievement. By the implementation of this project, we will see an improvement in the network problems as well as wider connectivity. This will give a major fillip to mobile broadband and Digital India for the benefit of people living in rural and remote areas."

DigiGaon Initiative for Empowering Common Man:

The DigiGaon initiative proposed to provide telemedicines, education and skills through digital technology will increase empowerment in rural areas. The Budget focuses on inclusion, transparency, fiscal responsibility and gives a big push to the digital economy. It encourages a shift to digital platforms with incentives to payers as well as merchants driving convenience, efficiency and transparency.

An increase in allocation for the BharatNet project will bring high speed broadband on optical fibre connectivity. Under the BharatNet, optical fibre has been laid in 1,55,000 kms. This project will boost the government's Digital India mission into a digital economy. This budget has made special provisions to ensure greater financial growth, with emphasis on enhancing cyber security in finance, and bringing greater coordination and transparency between departments. The recent spectrum auctions have removed the spectrum scarcity in the country and also give a major fillip to mobilising Digital India, for the benefit of rural people or common man.

The healthcare sector also received many positive announcements in this budget. These announcements made from the reduction of the cost on life saving drugs to the launch of DigiGaon

to promote telemedicine are commendable. The new rules to be formulated for medical devices will help in reducing costs of medical devices. Linking Aadhaar cards with the health conditions of the citizens is another great initiative undertaken by the government to improve rural health.

Implementation of tele-Medicine and m-Health will help the country to serve rural and underserved regions, after manages to resolve cases remotely.

Mobile Health (mHealth): Saving the medical practitioners' time by providing a common database consisting of patients' information (such as, x-rays, CT scans and other clinical information and the patients progress) by equipping doctors with iPads connected to a centralized patient information system. Such measures also help the patients to know about their progress from their beds.

Most importantly, the core processes within the institutions become automated, making early detection and quick diagnosis, proving it to be quite impactful.

Tele-medicine: Bridging the urban rural divide by extending low-cost consultation and diagnosis facilities to the remotest areas via high speed internet and telecommunication.

Though, the concrete efforts are desired to fasten the adoption of technology by the healthcare and education sector. The adoption of different initiatives, such as skill development, electronic health records (EHR), telemedicine and mhealth (mobile health), could benefit India by alleviating the existing scarcity of teachers/trainers and doctors and widening the reach of quality education and healthcare services to remote areas. Simultaneously, the government could consider deduction of expenditure incurred in securing accreditation or implementing EHR/other technology for the digitisation of the healthcare sector, a robust infrastructure is required for better connectivity of all technology-driven services.

Intel's initiative towards Digitization:

Intel India announced the launch of 'Ek Kadam Unnati Ki Aur', an initiative aimed at working with the government to create the blueprint for the digitization of rural India. Under this project,

the first such 'Unnati' Kendra has been set up at a Common Services Center (CSC) in Nadimpalle village of Mahabubnagar district of Telangana and will be used to create the framework for the Telangana Model Digital Village. Under the programme, Intel will work with central and state governments to create a blueprint meant to drive technology enabled transformation at the grassroots in 10 states in India. Connecting rural India needs an approach with a hardware, broadband connectivity, digital learning skills and locally relevant solutions. The effective digitization of rural India will be the key of success for Digital India or DigiGaon initiative.

Digital Services in Rural India:

Rural India lacks basic services and infrastructure required for accessing quality education and minimum healthcare services, making it lagging behind the urban population. In order to make IT facilities successful across all regions, thereby bridging the rural-urban divide, certain elements are needed to be ensured:

- Stable source and supply of electricity and internet services in every rural area, so as to facilitate IT innovations applied.
- Online individual account access to services, to ease the procedure of gaining knowledge about suitable educational course and the nearest

health center or availability of certain specialist at certain point of time or to book an early appointment and other such facilities without wasting much time and labor.

- Hospital and clinics' staff (doctor and nurses) can avail the IT facilities, making data management hassle free when checking any health reports and data of a patient or sharing the same with experts belonging to other cities or states.

India will be benefited by applying digitization across all levels of development and healthcare sector. In a massively populated country like India, digitization will provide better education and healthcare access to human resources. Digitization potentially will enable the education and healthcare industry to manage its huge volumes of data. Digitization is a way to improve the performance of rural education and healthcare systems by linking various systems via data and communications platform. With tele-medicine, and online educational programmes we will be able to lower the cost of education and patient care and thereby increase the effectiveness.

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Digi Dhan Mela organized in Jaipur to Spread Awareness on Cashless Transactions

As part of the awareness campaign on cashless transactions, a Digi-Dhan Mela was organized today here at SMS Investment Ground. A large number of people from Jaipur and nearby areas turned up in the Mela. The public and private sector banks put up their stalls, where people were given information about the digital transactions. The officials manning the stalls also answered to the queries of the people. The participants were also informed about various platforms of digital transactions and the procedure to use it. The officials said that digital transactions are safe and there is no risk involved in it.

The State of Bank of India, Oriental Bank of Commerce, Canara Bank, PNB, Vijaya Bank, SBBJ, UCO, BOB, Allahabad Bank, HDFC, Axis and ICICI banks provided facilities of on the spot account opening at their stalls. They also helped the people in downloading their Apps for cashless transactions. Aadhaar Camp was also organized on the occasion, where people were given information about the importance of Aadhaar and the procedure to obtain it. To facilitate people to shift to the digital platforms, some telecom companies also put up their stalls, where SIM cards were distributed and people were taught about using mobile apps.

Indian Oil Corporation, IFFCO, Chambal Fertilizers and a few other companies also participated in the Mela. They informed people about their products and the procedure to purchase them using digital platforms. Government of Rajasthan put a "Digital Rajasthan" stall. The Project Manager Viplav Singh, deployed at the stall, told that software based video conferencing facility has been provided at E-Mitra kendras. This facility will help people to resolve their issues and talk to the concerned officials online. The information about various developmental schemes is also available on this software. He said that this tool will prove very useful for public redressal system.

The villagers found the Digi-Dhan Mela very fruitful as it helped in raising the level of their knowledge about the cashless transactions