

## Digital Divide in India

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### Abstract -

India a developing country, miraculously functioning through a phase of dynamic economic progress, targeting to a manifestation of a fully Digital Nation. But this utopian dream has a meticulous hurdle against reality. A country which is struggling with 74.04% of literacy rate is expected to have much higher rate of technological discrepancy. An access in to the World Wide Web is the very first check list which needs to be ticked off, but 2016 has confirmed only 29.50% of population having hands over internet service. A conscientious digital divide in 2018 admitted over 400 million cyberspace user within 1.35 billion of total demography. Where expectations include delivering modern gizmos to every hand yet there are people around the corner of this nation who are completely devoid of the term 'network'. Where encouragement is giving for plastic money, there are citizens who still have issues using the banking service. A digital divide has disembodied the nation and its integrity into people with and without ICT skills. India is a country which is suffering an agonizing contrary between a beatific future of a modern India and a prejudicial past of limitations and restraints. The chauvinism of backwardness that has once stopped education and progression in the society, is now barring the path of digital development and higher rate of internet penetration.

**Keywords:** Internet Service<sup>1</sup>, Cyberspace<sup>2</sup>, Plastic Money<sup>3</sup>, Digital Divide<sup>4</sup>, ICT Skill<sup>5</sup>, Internet Penetration<sup>6</sup>, Digital Nation<sup>7</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

An inappropriate pace of social development through digital aid is what digital divide is. It's a severe social disparity of modern times which has caused isolation

for the people who are unable to swim with the tide of technology. It is the acute inequality camouflaged under the promising realm of development. There are several factors in the contemporary ground which contributes to this social disproportion. Finance is the first vital aspect to make responsible as technology is not dime a dozen. The tools and appliances come handy only to them who can afford. Age is the second factor to draw a line of disparity. In a common scenario, the younger people do have greater digital enthusiasm than the older one. Sometimes gender plays a separating role when males are seen to be more widget friendly than women. Education becomes a serious cause when reading instructions are a vital step towards digital access. Sometimes disabilities of both mind and body also pose as a stumbling block. Digital divide thus an inevitable issue that prevails worldwide, but in a developing country like India the picture is rather upright and vivid.

### PROBLEM OF DIGITALISATION IN INDIA

Aideology of digital India is one of the overwhelming flabbergasted vision to realise. But before materialising this felicity, many bars need to be broken and impediments need to be negotiated. India is a country with an astounding spectre of diversity. And this physical and cultural variation puts forward multifaceted difficulties on the way of chasing the noble aspiration.

### Physiographic Structure:

The geographical variegation of India is very notable. From lofty peaks of Himalaya to lush green evergreen forests, the nation is abundant with natural resource. Hence some of the places are so much far-flung and inaccessible that communication becomes inconceivable. There are settlements in Himalayan mountains situated beyond 4500 m from sea level. Again there are people who lead a wandering lifestyle in the western deserts. The primitive tribal people existing inside the north eastern evergreen forests or within the island territory are absolutely detached from the mainstream of life. Adverse physical proximity of some places made the digital inequality feasible.

### Economic Disparities:

It is a fact which can never be averted. Monetary affluence and purchasing ability are bound to contradict inside a stereotypical market. The info-bahn comes near-at-hand when backed with enough fund. From gadgets, applications to internet service, every approach requires certain level of financing. The access to this information superhighway is limited only for them who can affirm with the associated payments. Thus the people standing at the terminal end of economy have no ground to stay at the hopeful prospect.

### Transport and Communication:

Transportation is an important factor in the theory of growth poles. Development of any region is wholly dependent on the transport and communication system of the area. The geographically isolated areas are deprived of proper road and communication facilities thus installing amenities for telecommunication and internet service also becomes challenging in these places. Still in far off corners in India even electricity has no existence, which makes cyber accessibility impossible. Thus infrastructural retardation becomes one of

the biggest blockage to the destination digital India.

### Literacy rate:

Though an ascending literacy rate is an accomplishment for a developing country like India, yet the nation is struggling with functional literacy. But when the topic is regarding technological approach even functional education fails to mitigate the imbalance. A demography with a consummation in ICT skill requires a neat formal education in a first level which enables them to follow all the instructions and guides which are very much practical and precise. Over the above the commands in the operating systems are given in English language which is still extrinsic to most of the people who are educated in vernacular. So, proper educational and skill based accessibility is a basic requirement for a digitalised nation.

## THE SCENARIO OF DIGITAL DIVIDE IN INDIA

The digital divide in Indian panorama has a specific structure, where each an every factor can be linked.

64.84% was the literacy rate of India in 2001 census and 2011 marked an uplifting change to 74.04%. A 9.2% of increment of educational endeavour couldn't promise adapting population towards information technology. The complications of language is another tale to share in the scenario of India. There are 22 official languages, 13 scripts and over 700 dialects, which make the education system more problematic with higher possibilities of dropout rate. The figure of student enrolment keeps on drastically decrease from primary to higher education and over the above poor curriculum of IT and computer knowledge makes the divide projecting.

An approximate 26% of the populace are directly untouched by the network of information. However 2006 was

settled with only 2% (40 million) internet user and 4% (80 million) in 2009 which however increased to 10% in 2011, 26% in 2015 and 27% (405 million) in 2016. 2018 marks 462 million active internet user and 430.30 million active mobile internet user. By 2021 it has been estimated that the internet penetration may reach up to 635.80 million user and 829 user till 2021. There are 250 million active social media user in 2018 and 230 million of mobile social media user in the same year.

It is very much expected that gender would become the factor of disparity in Indian even in such sensitive case. As usual male has been dominating the cyberspace with 71% of male internet user and 29% of female user. As in prejudicial country like India education and opportunities are readily open for men in the first place before it is available for women. A settled fact of more young cyber penetrator is further affirmed with the estimation of 67% of user being under 35 by 2020. Though with the existing disparity an assurance of increasing internet penetration and lesser digital discrepancy is expected. Till March 2018, India has managed to cover a wireless subscriber base of 1183.41 million with 662.18 million in urban area and 521.23 in the rural. The total tele-density increased to 91.09 all over India, where urban having 55.96% share of wireless subscriber and 44.04% share in the rural. Thus rural India always seems to be standing on the odd edge of development. However 412.60 million of broadband subscriber is the bright side of the account.

Electricity coverage has shown a positive trend of 82% of total coverage in 2016 from 43% around 2000. Yet few places still lack proper spark. Some places are officially documented with the electricity board but connection failure and unavailability of service is the true disgraceful picture.

## GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE

Indian government has taken enough initiative to bridge the gap of digital dissonance. Some of which are the Kissan Call Centre, launched on January 21st, 2004 by the Agricultural Ministry. This is an enthusiasm put forward to bring the people involved with primary activity together. It aims to answer their question in 22 different local language. The line is open from 6:00 am to 10:00 pm, where queries are mitigated for different purposes such as Agriculture, Poultry, Animal Husbandry, Bee Keeping, Sericulture, Aquaculture, Fishery etc.

The Bhoomi Project jointly conducted by the Karnataka State Government and the Government of India to digitize the proper land record. A proper software mechanism is used to control changes in land registry.

The TDIL or the Technology Development for Indian Language is a one of the noble dynamism propounded by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology; Government of India to span over the linguistic diversity. It is basically concerned with the information processing tools and techniques with human machine interaction without language barrier. It is multilingual information source.

The upcoming efforts towards digital India include the Digi Locker project, My Gov.in, e sign Framework, Swachh Bharat Mission Mobile App, National Scholarship Portal, e Hospital, Digitize India Platform, Bharat Net a high speed digital highway, Wi Fi Hotspots, Next Generation Network of BSNL, Electronic Development Fund, Centre of Excellence of Internet of Things.

Thus Government of India is into a full effort to connect all kind of gaps that reinforces the divide.

## CONCLUSION

The true image of Indian digital divide lies between the promising statistical data and the raw smash of reality check. People exists who keeps distance from the internet service in fear of being viced. There are consumers who runs away from online banking services even from the hearth of urban agglomeration when the anxiety chases about being frauded. To use or not to use the hyperspace, to get or not to get into the web is nothing but all about attitude and perception about the world around us. This is a zone where even purest of statistical representation cannot depict the true impression. Digital divide is not always about the services we get but also about the choices we make that could make our life wonderful.

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