

Digital Diffusion And Its Impact Over Unorganized Sector Of Assam

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Abstract: Digital India is one of the excellent drives on promoting digital technology in the India which makes it different in the Global world. This new drive to promote mobile connectivity and internet service can help India to take massive advancement in the digital world. This digitalization generates diffusion in the country especially in Northeastern part by providing some access to the states like Assam in promotions of e-commerce and empowerment of the unorganized sector. The expectation of this initiative to improve the technology interface through getting the maximum coverage with the help of e-Governance and e-Service; but it lamentably generated a difficulty to the people associated with the unorganized sector of the state. This digital initiative divided the whole society among haves and have not's due to the inability to access the technology among this small and marginal employers. This paper investigates extent of Digital India diffusion and digital divide in unorganized sector of Assam. There are numerous determinants of Digital India in unorganized sector that have been a prime need of time to an open discussion.

Index Terms: Digital India, Unorganized Sector, IT applications, Internet Service, E- Commerce

1 INTRODUCTION

Digital India initiative has dramatically evolved in transforming societies, cultures and economies in India. The used of IT application and Internet technology in various has been able to influence a larger sections of society. Digital transmission persuaded the IT development, which increases productivity, competitiveness, socio- economic growth and human welfare by different sectors of economy and there begins the digital divide in the use, access, skills and others (Saundariya, 2005). There seems to be an inequality between the people who are associated with the unorganized sector and where information technology is still less popular and debatable issue. In a State like Assam which experienced the urbanization and industrialization just after 1990's the Digital India initiative plays a substantial role in affecting the life of the people associated with the unorganized sector. The Digital Divide is now a social issue that denotes a contradiction in between the formal workers, the e-commerce and this marginal class who is less educated and less skilled. Access of information and Internet between this sector have created a huge gap by dividing the employment sector into haves and have not's. The ease of access of Internet in a less developing society of states like Assam makes the people incapable in maintenance of their business due to less knowledge to access the Internet access and IT applications. Unorganized sector always been a key way of income generation and a way to improving the quality of life to people living in relatively remote and sparsely populated areas of the state. The people of Assam live mostly in rural areas that's makes them less aware about the digital drive and the significance of it in their day to day life.

2 METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on both Primary and Secondary data. Primary data are collected from two fast developing city of the State Dibrugarh and Jorhat. These two cities have experienced a huge number of unorganized sector employees in the field of Street Vending, Small Distributor, Food producer, and grocery related items. Random sampling method is employed to collect the data through a structured interview schedule. A total number of 300 respondents are selected for the interview by inducting purposive sampling due to the availability of unorganized sector employee and they are main focus of the people lived in a city environment like Assam where earning level is relatively low. Secondary data are collected from previous studies and other reliable sources like various journals books, and online magazines. Unorganized Sector and Digital India initiative both are very vast and recent theme of research which covers a only a few dimensions. In a State like Assam where development and IT experience both are relatively new in comparison to the other part of the State

3 UNORGANISED SECTOR IN ASSAM:

Urbanization took place in Assam during the 1980s and being the gateway to the northeast it attracts large scale of rural migrants to the cities. Most of the migrants from rural areas of neighboring states are mainly unskilled and illiterate and invariably find themselves pushed into the slums or sub-urban settlement. Due to limited employment opportunities and for the survival of the families, most of the migrants have adopted street vending as a source of livelihood which can be observed in various urban parts of the state. It becomes one of the easiest ways to survive in the widespread urban unorganized sector. Unorganized sector has increasingly become a 'livelihood' opportunity for those marginalized people in response to insufficient job creation. It is a very significant component of urban economies for several reasons as it provides goods and services at a low price and generates more prospects for earning income to the indigenous city residents and the poor migrants. This sector attracts those who have limited opportunities for obtaining formal employment or prestigious business and minimizes the chances of social exclusion and marginalization. On the one hand, the policy of the state authorities to this sector is not very effective. Development of Unorganized sector is one of the significant apparatus of the urban informal economy of

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Assam. During the 1970s and 1980s, it was widely assumed that the new economic policies and resources would provide a dynamic transformation to the poor traditional economy of the state. With progressive urbanization and industrialization, people who come to cities in search of a job or better opportunities for livelihood have to change in culinary ethics and adopt a few new ethos. The prevalence of unorganized sector has grown among the cosmopolitan population coming from different parts of the country. Earlier, the State was predominantly inhabited by the indigenous people from different community and classes. However, during the last four decades, a drastic change has been observed in the unorganized sector and has become omnipresent characteristics in the State. This is primarily because of the migration of different ethnic groups and people from other states associated with urbanization. In the last two decades, the informal sector is the one field which has witnessed a number in the employment in many parts of the state. Due to the unavailability of adequate numbers of formal jobs, easy entry, minimum investment, the small scale of operation, low level of educational and skill requirements, a large section of the population is engaged in this sector. The types of work that make up the informal economy are diverse, particularly concerning capital invested, the technology used and income generated. This could range from self-employment or unpaid family labour to unorganized sector, cobbling and garbage-picking. The workers who were deprived of the formal sector due to insecurity in the workplace benefits, social protection and representation, they get attracted to this sector which provides an opportunity to secure their basic needs for survival. Thus, it plays a crucial role in assuring livelihoods to a large underprivileged section of the state.

4. IMPACT OF DIGITALIZATION OVER UNORGANIZED SECTOR:

Commencement of Digital India scheme on 1 July, 2015 by the honorable Prime Minister of India is to prepare India for an improved future. The prime focus of this scheme is to connect the rural areas with high-speed of network in terms of Information Technology and also a step toward digital transaction. Most of the basic necessity like Communication & IT, rural empowerment, utilization of the resources, accessible health care etc. are comes directly under this scheme. In India earlier the digitalization, unorganized sectors employee uses the traditional methods of transaction in every course of their business. Due to technical illiteracy this digital drive is difficult experience and means for switching of their steps and conducting the activity. In India, unorganized sector share almost 70 percent of the total employment this initiative open up knew hitches to the people connected to this sector. Unorganized Sector comprised of those people who are less skilled and less educated and engaged only for their livelihood and to fulfill basic necessity. Assam, which is known as the gateway of Northeast India is also known as the hub of informal sector employee who meet up with their needs by providing cheapest service and goods. Digitalization emerged as new peril to this section which opens for a new way for the e-commerce sector. Absence of minimum technological awareness, the unorganized sector of the States faced a great hurdle and failed to compete with the new counterpart. This digital diffusion has completely ruined the foundational structure of this marginal class and rose as a key issue in the

livelihood and social security of this marginal class.

5. DIGITAL DIFFUSION AND UNORGANIZED SECTOR OF ASSAM:

Digitalization raise up as a major challenge in Assam to the people associated in unorganized sector. The exponential growth of Digitalization boosted up the e-commerce sector in the state which involve in most part of the service delivery previously covered by unorganized sector. The technological advancement, foundational structure, infrastructure, introduce of IT application, security and privacy and authentication helps this e-commerce sector in spreading their scope and business strategy's. In other hand the non-technical issues like population, lack of accessibility in service, lack of awareness, low literacy and low skilled stands up a crucial challenge for the unorganized sector to meet up with the e-commerce. The facilities available in e-commerce help it to be more closed with the people by proving quality service at cheaper price then the unorganized sector service providers. Thus it is quite challenging to the unorganized sector service providers to elucidate the issues related to the service provided by them. Following table depicts a clear picture of the issues faced by this sector in competing with the e-commerce.

Table 1: Respondent's View on regarding Common Issue using IT application

Issues in IT application	Accessibility (In %)		Response (In %)		
	Yes	No	Manageable	Easy	Complex
Technical Problem	71	29	48.3	14	37.6
Availability of Internet Service	25	75	24	10.33	65.66
Awareness	36	64	32	28.33	39.33
Lack of Knowledge	27	73	22.33	11.67	66

Table 1 clearly shows the respondent's view on using IT application in their business is great obstacle. Although most of these application are freely available in digital platform like Mobile app Play Store, App Store and Windows Store but due to their traditional knowledge they have faced technical problems. 71% of the respondents have faced technical problem in operating IT application in their workplace. Only 29% of them positively reply that there is issue with using of these applications. 48% of respondents have pointed their view that using IT application is somehow manageable, and the rest 37.6% faced complexity due to the nature of these applications. Availability of Internet Service at work place is primary question for the unorganized sector employee in the State. As a part of the Northeastern region, Assam still faces a great deal of problem in accessing high speed internet service. Although 4G service has been running in most part of the State but due to weak coverage and poor signal strength makes it quite difficult to run the application like Paytm, BHIM, Phone Pay and Google Pay in transaction process. Data proves that only 25% of the unorganized sector is covered by

accessible internet service which is mostly accessed by the employee through their mobile phones. Due to the poor network signal they hesitate to depend on digital transaction. 75% of the employee still uses traditional ways in exchanging their services with customers. Awareness is another issue regarding uses of digital platform for unorganized sector. In a state like Assam, most of people engaged in unorganized sector have possessed low level of education. Due to absence of any technical knowledge they prefer cash as mode of exchanging either than digital methods. Data proves that 64% of the workers are completed only primary level of education and therefore they prefer cash for operating their activity. 39% percent of the worker faces difficulty in managing this IT application in their day to day life. On other hand respondents have mentioned that due to low level of education and illiteracy makes it quite difficult to access the IT application in their daily activity. 73% unorganized sector worker have faced a great deal of problem due to low level of education. 66% of the total respondents have mentioned that the terms and conditions relating to this application are very confusing and out of their scope of understanding. Respondents argued that it is unsatisfactory for the distributor to exchange by digital means due to low level of amount and it always bears some extra tax related issue. It can be said that the majority of workers are feel comfortable with the traditional methods of transaction and in their work place as IT applications consume time which may affects their business.

6. E-COMMERCE AND UNORGANIZED SECTOR:

The e-commerce sector in India has been in forefront for last one year and generating possibly the maximum amount of fund and employment. There has also been a definite pessimism nearby this sector is probably the best way to organize the unorganized sectors in India. In a state like Assam which experienced industrialization just few years ago this e-commerce sector has bullying the workers of the unorganized sector. Facility provided by this e-commerce institutions like COD (Cash on Delivery); Pay Late is playing a major role for the lagging in unorganized sector retailers. Most of the unorganized sector retailer like Street Vending, Small Local Producer, and Grocery Store are highly affected sector owing to the emergence of e-commerce institutions. According to Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)(2001) the gap between individuals, households, businesses and geographic areas at the different socio-economic levels with regard to their opportunities to access information and communication technologies and their use of internet. The unorganized sector environment in a region like Northeastern India, especially Assam has faced a great deal of problem due to unavailability of physical structure for transmission facility, absence of connection equipment such as a computer, modem, and access line; and proper training to use computer and internet in their workplace. Both the production and distribution process in recent time needs new technological advancement to reach the diverse segments of the population lived in urban and sub urban areas. While the unorganized sector invested their more concentration to the market in distribution level, they austere failed to realize the passive dimensions of Internet access. In the 2000s, the beginning of industrialization and urban

development Assam become a focal point to the many investors. Availability of raw resources, low cost labour, simple and easy investment policy of the government attracts the investors to the State. Government as well as the organizations in the state became concerned about the development of indigenous production house for boosting the whole state in socio-economic sphere. But after 2010, an inequality has been noticed in the access to new technologies, whether among individuals or in the institution in occupying the market which also labeled in the access internet service. A digital diffusion draw attention to the local unorganized sector and it made a diverse effect on many fronts which are categorically needed to overcome. The significant reason for the constant gap between unorganized sector and organized sector in country is telecommunications infrastructure gap, which results in the information gap between the producers and distributors. Even though there is an increase in the rural internet service and e-commerce felicities, the difference between the unorganized and organized sector and rural exists consistently. A strong positive response from producer of these unorganized sectors of the state devoted a clear important of technology literacy only afterward of the government Digital India Scheme. In to-days world e-commerce continued as a foremost place of investment to fracture the necessary development of the distribution and production support. Digital advertising and information revolution undoubtedly help to mark a definite place in the market to this sector. The Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (DISHA) or National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) Scheme has been framed to impart IT training to the non-IT literate citizens to become IT literate played a vital role in the northeastern region. The Unorganized sector of the state realized the market strategy and urgency of digitalization in their workplace and the whole production process. The small stake holder of this sector like food producer, street vendors, local grocery manufacturer, toy industries, crafting and handlooms have quite progressive in adopting the digitalization by launching new mobile friendly app, website and online transaction. But still there are some fields which need to be more upgraded and have to understand the demand of situation and reality of market environment. The sector like small tea producers, organic agriculture producers, packaging industries, local beverage industries are far more behind in adopting the technological advancement. The traditional way of exchanging makes it more perilous to maintaining the manufacture and distribution policy. There is always a full stop to serve opportunities if they do not want to effectively serve, the service will stop. Development of market strategy and e-commerce advertising models of collaboration among researchers, social scientists, market analysis etc. is essential to cope up with the flow of the market and the globalized world. Unorganized sector is always lurking by many factors and so the requirements are met in a technology innovation and new concepts. Since India's development and self-sufficiency lies in hands of the indigenous producers; so they can plays a much-needed role not only in bridging digital divide but also in building a well-informed and sound economy.

7. CONCLUSION

Unorganized sector is a source of livelihood and employment for many throughout the world. It is seen that alternative policy for minimizing the vulnerability issues of this sector in developing country like India is always come into the fore

front. As it is related to livelihood security, the portent of unorganized sector is surrounded by intense academic debate, and the number of competing for explanation is offered to explain the basis of rights to earn and livelihood security. The development of Information and Communication Technology, its applications are changing the way people learn work and interact. The Diffusion in the market economy leads to the information gap between the people have and have-nots in the distribution and production sector in India. Even though there are initiatives and projects like TDIL Project, Friends Project, Digital India, Digital Literacy Mission taken by the Government of India to bridge the gap (digital divide) the inequality prevails. Unorganized sector is growing fast in India; the country is increasingly getting divided between the indigenous distributors and Multinational Corporations who have access to technology and those who do not. The technological infrastructure in India has penetrated in all traits of country, but a large number of people especially like northeastern areas do not have abilities to use technology in proper way. So the governments have to provide the maximum benefits to tackle the obstacles such as illiteracy, lack of skills and in infrastructure in the unorganized sector too. The Government should simplify the rules and regulations that prevent them from carrying on their occupation with dignity and freedom.

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